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HALF CENTURY JUBILEE  
OF  
GRACE CHURCH  
1879.







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“The Committee appointed by the Vestry on March 24th, 1845, to superintend the laying of the corner-stone of Grace Church, respectfully submit the following report :

“The corner-stone of the new edifice was laid by the Bishop of the Diocese on the 8th of April, 1845, with all the solemnities and devotions usual before such occasions.”

*Extract from the minutes of the Vestry.*

“PROVIDENCE, June 2d, 1846.

Tuesday in Whitsun Week.

On this day the new and splendid edifice erected by the Corporation of Grace Church, was solemnly dedicated to the service of Almighty God by the Rt. Rev. John Prentiss Kewley Henshaw, D. D., Bishop of Rhode Island, assisted by Bishop Doane of New Jersey, Bishop Eastburn of Massachusetts, and by several of the Reverend Clergy of the Diocese of Rhode Island and other Dioceses.”

*Extract from the minutes of the Vestry.*















“IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED, That this Corporation appoint a Committee to purchase the Providence Theatre, if it can be obtained for the sum of six thousand dollars, for the purpose of converting the same into a house of public worship, to be occupied by this church.”

*Extract from the minutes of a corporation meeting, held February 3d, 1832.*

“VOTED, That the consecration of the church shall take place on Thursday, the 15th inst., and that the Warden be requested to confer with Bishop Griswold on the subject.”

*Extract from the minutes of a vestry meeting, held November 3d, 1832.*







THE  
HALF CENTURY  
JUBILEE  
OF  
GRACE CHURCH

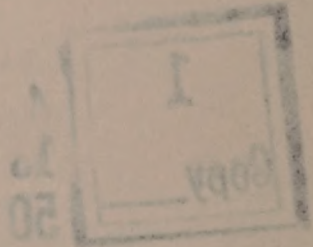
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND.

1829. 1879.

WITH PORTRAITS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

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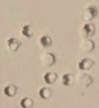
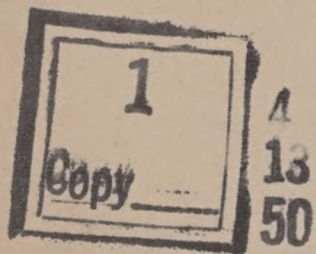
PROVIDENCE  
SIDNEY S. RIDER.  
1880.





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ON the following pages will be found the Sermons preached in Grace Church at the time of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the Parish. They are printed just as they were delivered at the time, and in the same order. There will also be found, in addition to a heliotype print of the Rectory, of the old Grace Church building, and of the present structure, heliotype portraits of all the Rectors Grace Church has had. It was thought that those persons who would be interested in this little volume at all, would be all the more interested because of its possessing these features.

The publisher begs to say in regard to the publication of this little memorial that it has long been printed, in fact was nearly ready for publication in December last, when the fire in Boston which destroyed the Heliotype Printing Co., burned all the portraits which had been printed for it, and all the negatives and engravings which had been, and were being used. He had to begin anew.

The drawing of the Church is an original one, made for the book, and is believed to be the first, and in fact the only one as yet made which at all represents the edifice.

100 pages



## ORDER OF SERVICES.

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### FRIDAY MAY 16TH.

7.30 P. M. The celebration of the Holy Communion with sermon by the present Rector, the Rev. DAVID H. GREER.

### SATURDAY, MAY 17TH.

11 A. M. Morning prayer, with sermon by the Rev. SAMUEL FULLER, D. D., Professor in Berkeley Divinity School, Middletown, Conn.,— the first Rector of Grace Church.

5 P. M. Evening prayer, with an historical discourse by the Rt. Rev. THOMAS M. CLARK, D. D., LL. D., Bishop of the Diocese.

### SUNDAY, MAY 18TH.

10.45 A. M. Morning prayer, with sermon by the Rev. ALEXANDER H. VINTON, D. D.

7.30 P. M. Evening prayer, with sermon by the Rev. C. GEORGE CURRIE, D. D., Rector of St. Luke's Church, Philadelphia.











The Rectory of Grace Church was begun in the spring of 1877, and finished and occupied in the spring of 1878.















The Rev. David H. Green,

ENTERED UPON THE RECTORSHIP OF GRACE CHURCH,

SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1872.







S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

THE OPENING OF THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION,

GRACE CHURCH, PROVIDENCE, R. I.,

*Friday Evening, May 16th, 1879.*

BY THE REV. DAVID H. GREER.







## SERMON.

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HEBREWS XII., 1st and part of 2nd.—“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.”

### I.

FRIENDS AND BRETHREN:—Fifty years have elapsed since the first sermon was preached in Grace Church Parish by the Right Reverend Alexander Viets Griswold, D. D., Bishop of the Eastern Diocese. From that time to this the Parish then inaugurated has been steadily increasing in numbers and strength until it has come to assume its present considerable proportions. There are those here to-night who can remember this adult when it was a child, who were identified, more or less, with its youthful career. Its early struggles were their struggles. Its early hopes and anxieties, trembling in the balance, were their hopes and anxieties; and the phases of experience through which it passed are the phases of experience through which they passed. Its official record is part of their personal life. Its history is their reminiscence, and its measure of success is a measure of their reward.



To all those persons, therefore, both clerical and lay, who have done so much towards building up this Parish into solidness and permanency of structure, I give to-night, in the name of the Parish, a most affectionate greeting, and extend a most cordial welcome.

In the work, however, of building up the kingdom of Christ in any particular field on earth, the process can never be said to be complete. The appointed laborers come, at appointed times, perform their several tasks, as they have gift and opportunity, then retire altogether from this earthly scene or withdraw to other engagements. But the task itself, once begun, is an endless task, and the superstructure of one period is but the foundation for the builders of another.

Fifty years ago the ground was broken, and the work upon this Parish-temple was commenced. From that time until now "hath it been in building, and yet it is not finished." I do not propose to-night to tell the story of the past, that will be done by another, at a later stage in these exercises. Neither shall I undertake the dangerous experiment of trying to forecast the future. But in response to what seems to be the requirement of the occasion, I shall venture here, in the presence of the sons and daughters and friends of Grace Church, to "consider the race that is set before us" to-day, the great duty devolving upon the Christian Church, and therefore upon all parochial fractions of that great integer at the present time.

What is that duty? Comprehensively stated, it is the duty of trying to redeem the life of this generation from a debasing and engrossing materialism, by the



quickening power of a positive faith in a supernatural and spiritual world. To a consideration of that topic I ask your attention.

## II.

You cannot be unaware—it is not worth while for me to assume that you are unaware—that there is a current of thought, that there is a line of influence in our time whose tendency is to undermine or weaken faith in the reality of the supernatural. It does not pretend to say that there is no supernatural background to human life and the universe. It simply declares that that supernatural background has not yet been discerned with such clearness and fullness of apprehension as to justify any positive affirmation concerning it by anybody whatsoever, and that confessed ignorance, however lamentable, is a better and healthier state of mind than the fancy without the reality of knowledge.

“If I am asked,” says one\* whose words are much quoted in these days, “if I am asked whether science has solved, or is likely in our day to solve, the mystery of the universe, I must shake my head in doubt”; but then he adds, “if the materialist is confounded and science is rendered dumb, who else is prepared with an answer?” “The rational attitude of a thinking mind towards the supernatural in religion,” says John Stuart Mill, “is that of the purest scepticism, as distinguished from a positive belief on the one hand and a positive unbelief on the other.” “The only attitude which, in

\* Dr. Tyndall in an article on “Virchow and Evolution,” in the NINETEENTH CENTURY for November, 1878.



strict logic," says the anonymous author, "Physicus," in his book on Theism, which it is admissible to adopt towards the question concerning the being of a God, is that of "suspended judgment"; and "this," he adds, "is the attitude which the great majority of scientifically-trained philosophers in our day actually have adopted in regard to the matter."

Now this doubtfulness, this uncertainty, touching the supernatural and the reality of the spiritual, is by no means confined to the laboratory of the physicist, and the study of the philosopher, but is distilling, by subtle, untraceable, imperceptible processes, down into the street, into the drawing room, into the market-place, and is permeating, more or less all minds; for whatever the current of thought that is flowing at any period in the upper stratum of intellectualism, it is sure in time to send its moisture throughout all the strata below, so that it is not only in the higher circles of thought, but among people generally, that we find to-day a great and lamentable want of theological assurance, of positive faith and conviction, and a little weakening of belief in the reality of the supernatural all along the line of doctrine, from belief in "hell" to belief in "heaven."

People do not invite this incertitude to come on, as Bacon says, by "an over-buckling towards it." The incertitude is in the air, they breathe it, they absorb it, it somehow gets into the system, it stays there like an intruder, or like a most unwelcome guest, undermining old confidences, insinuating new and at times startling suggestions, and provoking strange inquiries.



While it were a great mistake, therefore, upon the part of the Christian Church to-day to ignore such a condition of doubt, inasmuch as such an ignoring would make the church anachronistic in her ministrations, while it were a great mistake upon the part of the Christian Church to denounce such a condition of doubt, inasmuch as such denunciation would imply an utter misapprehension of the character of that doubt, it were a still greater and more lamentable mistake upon the part of the Christian Church if she should do anything to encourage it, inasmuch as such encouragement would be a surrender upon the part of the Christian Church of one of the very first and noblest of her functions.

For what is the Christian Church, and therefore all parishes that compose the Christian Church? Not an æsthetic club, not even an ethical club, not a grand, venerable institution for sentimental exercisings. Her primary office is to teach and enforce religion, and the primary office of religion is to teach and enforce faith in the supernatural, to conduct men into a positive belief in the reality of a supernatural world, to seek to establish their lines of life, their conduct, their emotional, their moral, and their intellectual nature upon a supernatural and spiritual basis. That, to be sure, has been the great duty confronting, and the "race set before" the Christian Church at every period in her history. But it is in an especial sense the duty confronting and the "race set before" her to-day. The Christian Church to-day is challenged, not at the outworks, but at the very central citadel of her faith, and she must meet that challenge, she must face the enemy



squarely, and attempt most earnestly and conscientiously the performance of the great duty that is thrust upon her. She may not try to hide her head or take refuge in the *alias* or disguise of certain very plausible and most bewildering phrases,—speaking of God as a “stream of tendency,” or as a “power that makes for righteousness,” or as a “cosmic force,”—or of the doctrine of immortality as a “posthumous influence that survives physical decay and outlives the tomb,”—hoping by means of such an *alias*, like a culprit self-condemned, to escape the vigilance of the police. Never, I think, has there been a time in the history of the Christian Church when it was more important than it is to-day for her to point with steady, unwavering index to those high, supernatural verities and spiritual realities on which religion rests, and in which she herself finds her *raison d’être*.

That, then, is the race that we have before us ; that is the duty we are to try to perform ;—nothing lower than that. How shall we run that race ? how shall we perform that duty ?

### III.

This brings me to say that the sanction of a supernatural faith,—the only sanction and enforcement which it is possible for parish Christianity to give,—possibly the only sanction required,—is the sanction or enforcement of a supernatural life. Consider this matter a few minutes.

Human nature is always unduly dominated, and circumscribed in its capacity for belief, by the immediate



and the passing experience. The kind of life that we are living at any particular time is, for that particular time, and as far as we are concerned, almost the only kind of life. We may not be prepared to say that there is no range of legitimate experience lying beyond the borders of that particular experience; but it does not strongly appeal to us, and we cannot easily believe in it. Every person looks out on life through the medium of his own engrossing occupation. To one person, this world is just a great and convenient opportunity in which to cultivate personal ambition and the love of power. To another it is a big and fruitful field in which to dig for money and get rich, and all things — even religion — all things are rated by standards of commercial value; while to still another it is but a variegated pleasure-garden, where he can gratify his senses and appetites and the lusts and the prides of life. Alleged realities, apart from the strongly flowing current of the particular experience, are always indistinctly and sceptically apprehended. It is not surprising, therefore, that in these days when material science has done so much for the benefit of society, when it has corrected so many disorders, broken down so many barriers in the path of a beneficent progress, multiplied so many conveniences about us, and contributed so efficiently to the development of a high and splendid civilization, it is not surprising that the men of this age, with such an undisturbed, vivid and grateful consciousness of material truth, should not be conscious much of any truth besides, or that material truth should come to be to



them “the key-note of all truth.” It would be surprising if it were not so. They see and they feel continually what material science has done. They are living under its influence perpetually, in all departments of life. Commerce has been quickened by it; agriculture improved; distance has been annihilated; physical pain relieved; pestilence stayed; disease arrested in its course; health diffused; thought accelerated; words have been given wing, and manifold blessings disseminated; railroads, telegraphs, telephones, microphones, microscopes, telescopes, printing presses,—“ubiquity-engines in general!” What wonder that in the almost exclusive engrossment of the attention, with these inestimable benefits of physical science,—what wonder that there should be but vague, dreamy, sceptical apprehension of any alleged realities over the physical line.

Why we all know, from our own experience, how we can become at times so engrossed in some one line of thought or conduct as not to know what is going on about us, the singing of the birds on the trees, the sounds upon the street, the forms of people passing by, even the striking of the clock upon the stairs or upon the mantel,—we are not conscious of any of these things. We are conscious only of that one thing that is going on so vehemently and so engrossingly in us; until, by some sharply-asserting, interruptive influx of life from that outside world, that part of our nature which had been asleep is wakened up and we become conscious of the things that are going on about us.

So upon this material age there must break in, through the agency of the Church, the sharply-asserting, inter-



ruptive influx of life from a world that is other than physical ; so that that part of the nature of this age which has been asleep may be wakened up, and that it may become conscious of, have developed in it, the capacity for believing in a great kingdom of God going on about it. Faith in the supernatural, in the reality of a spiritual universe, can not be enforced to-day by the sanction of Authority. That has had its day and it has ceased to be. Faith in the reality of the supernatural and the spiritual cannot be enforced to-day by the sanction of reason ; for reason brings in a verdict of "suspended judgment." Philosophy and Authority, are both exercised in vain ; and the Church to-day must attempt the enforcement of a supernatural faith by returning to methods that are indeed primitive, as primitive as Jesus Christ,—and attempt the enforcement of a supernatural faith by the sanction and the reflection of a life that is impetused and motivated by a belief in supernatural things. A relapse into "obscurantism" will not do. The fulminating of a terroristic thunder that is no longer terroristic will not do. Making a gorgeous display of old, worn-out mythologic scenery, and dreaming over again the old and beautiful mediæval dreams will not do ; will not do. Faith in a God, faith in a soul, faith in a spiritual kingdom, touching us, encompassing us, with a spiritual Christ at the head of it, must become to-day habilitated in flesh and blood and clothed in concrete expression. It must get into our business and into our civilization with the railroad and the telegraph, so that men may become conscious of it as they are conscious of a locomotive, of an engine, of a warehouse, of



a plough-share, of an oil painting upon the wall. They must look at it, touch it, handle it ; it must walk with them by the way, go with them into their houses, sit down with them at their tables and break bread with them,—so that that “divine and superior sense of the soul,” of which John Bunyan speaks, may assert itself within them ; that they may come to recognize the legitimacy of that sense as an integral part of their nature, and that the data which it registers over the physical line are equally trustworthy with the data which are catalogued by the senses of the body.

Do we not all know what it is to come into the consciousness of new worlds and into the possession of new faiths by coming into contact with some new and sublime life ? We stand before the patriot and as we stand there looking up into his loyal face we believe in patriotism. We stand before the soldier who has just come home from the wars—bringing a gallant record with him and scarred with many wounds, and we believe in courage. Pure and unalloyed nobleness of motive and conduct, supreme unselfishness and charity, utterly disinterested benevolence, possibly we do not much believe in these things in the movement of our ordinary life, because in the movement of our ordinary life we do not much see them. Some day we stand in their presence, we look up into their eyes ; they speak ; we hear them ; we catch their inspiration ; we kneel down before them and ask them for their benediction, and the faith in the love of money, of pleasure and of power, which had been the great, driving, cardinal belief in our life sinks almost out of sight, and for the moment at least we believe in the



reality of those high and exalted virtues, there is nothing else so real.

So long, however, as the capacity for belief in those realities had been lying in us unexercised and latent we could not possibly come into the consciousness of those realities, although none the less real for that. In like manner this material age can not possibly come into the consciousness of a great kingdom of God about it, so long as that spiritual capacity, by which alone it can apprehend the realities of that kingdom of God, is lying buried, and smothered beneath the superincumbent stuff of the study of sense phenomena and the engrossment of sense pursuits. And yet the spiritual universe is there! And the spiritual faculty is here—in the heart of this generation! And this world to-day—to-night—is rushing on upon its path of material enthusiasms, full of dissatisfaction,—full of unrest, of overwork and worry,—because its best and divinest endowments have not been called out into exercise in their appropriate sphere; like a man with some divine genius-gift for music or painting or other noble art,—which has not yet been called out. He does not know that he has it. He does not know what it is that he is wanting; he only knows that he is constantly wanting something very much, which he never gets; and so he goes on more busily than ever with his stone-breaking and his book-keeping, and his shoe-cobbling and his hammering, and yet the thing he wants does not come;—until some day he chances to stand before the magnificent picture, or he chances to listen to the magnificent strains of the music of a master; then the divine genius-gift in him discovers



itself to his apprehension, by contact with its proper element, and he rests in his appropriate sphere.

In some such way as this, by a high spiritual life, the Church must restore to this generation the consciousness of its soul,—must make that consciousness a large, active, throbbing factor of civilization,—like railroads and telegraphs ; must redeem it from its engrossing, and debasing materialism, by bringing it so into contact with the reverberated music and the reflected beauty of a spiritual universe, that its spiritual faculty may become more fully developed, and that it may find rest in its appropriate sphere.

It were a great mistake to suppose that the scepticism of to-day is actuated by hostility to religion ; in some cases it may be, but not in the case of those who are most sincere, influential and thoughtful. The coarse and rowdy infidelity of two or three generations ago is an anachronism to-day. It is out of date, and to no persons is it more insufferably offensive than to the best representatives of our modern agnostic school. The scepticism of our time is not a devil's laugh. It is not a fiendish shout ; it is a most heart-broken cry,—like that of the Magdalen's on the resurrection morning,—“ they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” “ I am not ashamed,” says one of this school, “ to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe to me has lost its soul of loveliness, and when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine and the lonely mystery of existence as now I feel it, at such times I shall ever



find it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible." That does not sound like an enemy's voice, like the voice of one who hates religion; whence then comes this scepticism—this apparent inability of men to believe in what they so much desire to believe in—the reality of a supernatural and a spiritual universe around them? Partly at least because they are so much consciously in contact with a natural or material life, and so little consciously in contact with life that is impetused and motivated by a faith in the realities of a supernatural world, in a kingdom of Heaven and God. And this generation, instead of lifting up its arm to strike religion, is rather stretching out dumb hands in prayer to the Christian Church, and saying, "Oh! show us the Father. Do not simply point to him far away; do not merely reason about him, because we can reason too, we have reasoned in logic and philosophy, and we have brought in the verdict of 'suspended judgment', but oh! show us—show us the Father and it sufficeth us!" That is the duty set before us,—just that,—nothing lower than that. We have nothing to fear; but we have great duties to perform.

#### IV.

Where shall the Church get her faith in the supernatural, her belief in a spiritual universe. "Laying aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus." The Christian Church



does not evolve her faith in the supernatural out of her own consciousness. She does not spin out of herself the encompassing meshes of a Kingdom of God about her. She does not say, "go to, I will believe in God, in a death-surviving soul and in a Kingdom of Heaven," and then exercise herself so assiduously in such directions that those tentative beliefs come at last to be actual verities to her consciousness; — like a person who has dreamed a beautiful dream and then tries to live for days and months as though that dream were true until at last he comes to regard it as an actual occurrence, oh, no, not in that way; but there afar off, upon the background of the great historical picture of the Christian civilization, is the bright and ever-brightening reflection of the splendors and realities of a spiritual world brought down and into this world through the medium of a personal Life. There it is. How it came there? Who put it there? How exhaustively and exactly to define it? These are interesting and legitimate, but incidental questions. There it is. There is no doubt about that. The miraculous phenomena associated with it do not prove it true. It proves them true. It makes them presumptively probable, to begin with. It carries them along and supports them by its own inherent consistency with them. It verifies itself by itself. Its evidence, as Coleridge says, is in its existence; it needs no proof to commend it; for there it is, and that is enough. The spiritual world has been revealed, verified to the consciousness of the Church, through the medium of a Life. It is not a dream, nor a hope, nor a speculation. There it is,—irradiating a glory that cannot be



accounted for upon any other hypothesis except that it is the glory of a God. From that Life the Church receives her faith in the supernatural; to that Life she must come and come again and continue to come; for the strengthening of her faith, and as she is quickened more and more by its influence she becomes the body, the flesh, the blood, of that Life, by which it communicates its quickening influence to all the generations, awakening the slumbering spiritual faculties of men, redeeming them from an engrossing materialism, and performing forever the great office of saving the world's soul.

## V.

But there are some other and lesser sanctions; the quickening influence of the personal reflections of that greater Life,—“the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, the Holy Church of God throughout all the world,” the Church at large has her catalogue of saints; and so has every fractional part and parish of that Church.

And we have ours, my brethren. And as we stand here to-night on the verge of the celebration of our fiftieth anniversary, there comes to us—so readily to some of us—the memory of those whose characters have been purified and whose labors have been quickened by that personal faith in that personal Jesus and in the reality of that spiritual Kingdom which he illustrated, and at the head of which he stands. We remember to-night the burning enthusiasm of a John A.

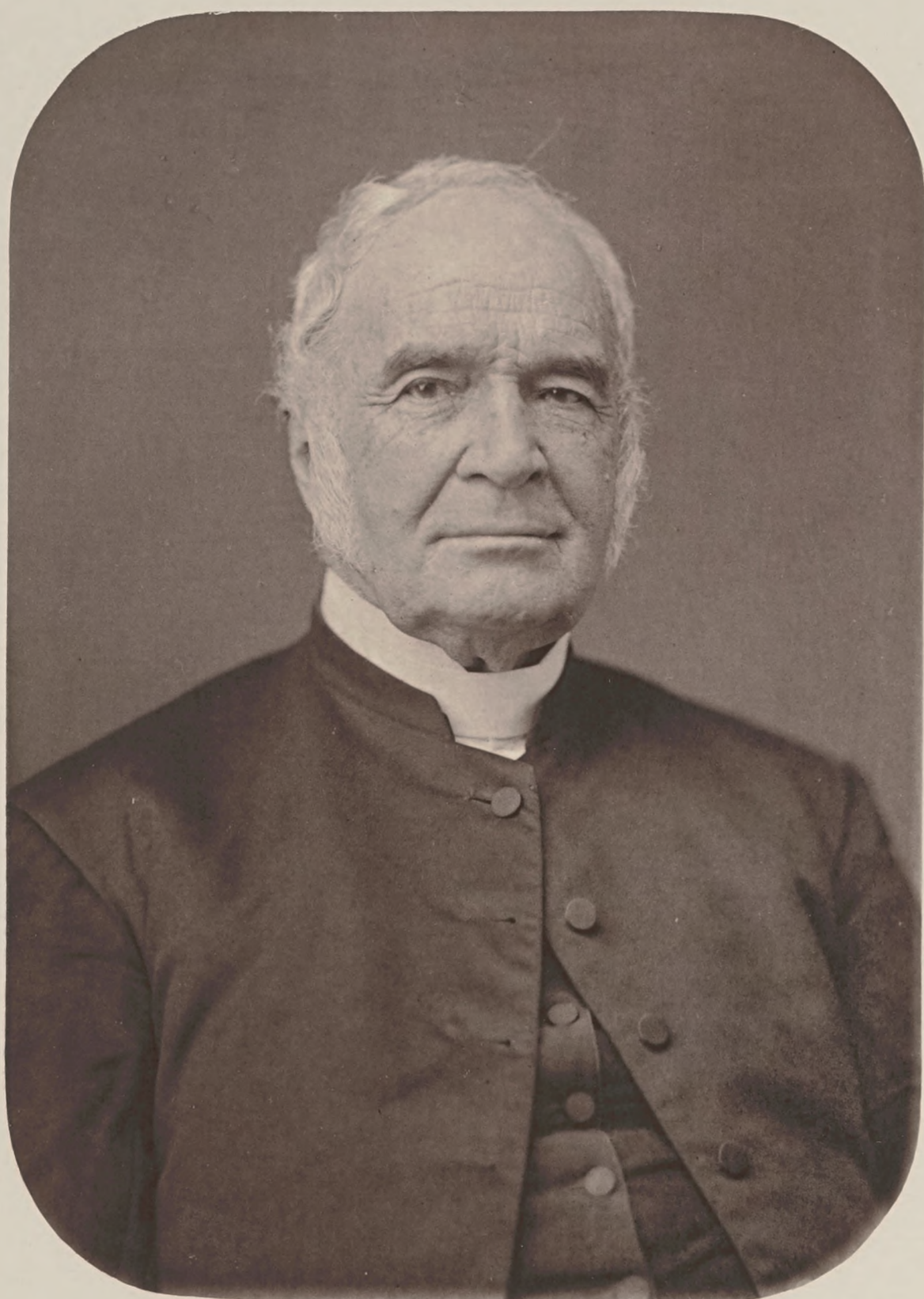


Clarke ; we remember to-night the unselfish and wise counsels, the self-denying labors of a Bishop Henshaw, and the pure hearts and lives of those to whom they and others ministered. Some of them have been gone these many years. Some of them have more recently departed, aye ! even this very week one has gone who looked forward with pleasant anticipations to this jubilee service, whose calm, serene face, whose hoary head in the ways of righteousness, I miss as I look around in the congregation to-night. And as we think of them the Kingdom of God seems to be very near to us. It seems almost to touch us. We seem to be standing in its very midst. "Seeing we are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" let us understand our time, and the great responsibilities that it devolves upon us ; let us address ourselves to our duty and laying aside every weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us ; let us run with patience the race that is set before us in this generation, looking unto Jesus.











The Rev. Samuel Fuller, D. D.

WAS THE FIRST RECTOR OF GRACE CHURCH.

HE TOOK CHARGE OF THE PARISH IN MAY, 1830, AND SURRENDERED  
IT IN MAY, 1831.







THE LORD'S SUPPER,

A SERMON PREACHED AT

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, GRACE CHURCH,

*Providence, R. I., Friday Evening, May 16th, 1879.*

BY THE REV. SAMUEL FULLER, D. D.







## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

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REVELATIONS I. : 5, 6 —Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.

In the summer of the year 1830, Sunday, July 4, I administered, as the first Rector of Grace Church, Providence, its first communion. The partakers were only twenty-four persons.\* What multiplied and immortal fruits has the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper since borne in this parish! A single cluster has grown to be a vintage. "The little one has become a thousand!"

At the close of my brief Rectorship, my last text was the words I have just repeated. Thus I resume to-day at the place where I ceased to speak as a minister of the Diocese of Rhode Island, more than forty-eight years ago.

The ascription of St. John to our loving, atoning, and sanctifying Saviour introduces my subject for the present semi-centennial commemoration:

\* This Communion was my *first* administration of the Eucharist. Only a month previous (June 6), Bishop Griswold had, in St. John's Church, ordained me Priest. The Rector, Rev. Dr. Crocker, and Rev. C. H. Alden of Bristol, united with him in the laying on of hands.



THE NEW TESTAMENT WORDS RESPECTING THE LORD'S  
SUPPER.

This subject is always new. Never fresher than now, in the minds and hearts of Christ's people.

The words of the New Testament respecting the Lord's Supper are *before* its institution, *at* its institution, and *after* its institution.

I. Our Lord's words before the institution of His Supper, occur in His discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum :

"I am the bread of life. The bread is my flesh. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing ; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John vi., 35, 53, 63.

Christ's words in this passage are often misunderstood and perverted. This misunderstanding and perversion, and the consequent introduction and promulgation of error, arise from either ignorance or neglect of this imperative law of interpretation.

NEW TESTAMENT GREEK USAGE.

This sovereign law will be my constant guide, while I attempt to explain the statements of our Lord and His Apostle, St. Paul, respecting the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

TEACHING NOT A SACRAMENT.

Is our Lord, in the expressions I have just repeated from the Gospel of St. John, speaking of the Sacrament of His body and blood ?



Not less than thirteen words and phrases, which the Evangelist St. Matthew uses, when describing the institution of the Lord's Supper, are entirely wanting in His discourse at Capernaum. These striking omissions prove that our Lord is not, in Chapter vi. of St. John's Gospel, speaking of His supper as an institution, but is speaking only of certain great truths preparatory to the sacrament He afterwards ordained, just before His crucifixion. His words are not in themselves signs and sacraments.

I repeat a portion of these declarations of our Lord: "I am the bread of life. The bread is my flesh. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

#### PERSONALITY, NOT PERSONIFICATION.

But at this point we are met by this assertion: Christ is not here speaking in His own person, but he is speaking by personification. He personifies Wisdom. He is merely repeating this declaration of Wisdom personified in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, "They that eat me, and they that drink me." (Ecclus. xxvi., 21.)

This theory of personification is a chimera.

1. When we hear our Lord say, "I am the bread of life," we are to penetrate deeper than the English version of His words. We must look into the original Greek.

(a.) In the Greek he says, "I myself am the bread of life."

A stronger and more conclusive expression of per-



sonality does not exist. If when our Lord says, "I myself am the bread of life," He does not declare, "I am personally the bread of life," then when he says, "I myself am the resurrection and the life," He does not declare, "I am personally the resurrection and the life." The Greek expression, "I myself am," is the same in both instances, and in the same sense. Thus the original Greek completely destroys the assumptions of certain interpreters who maintain that in His discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, our Lord is not speaking personally, but by personification.

(b). New Testament usage also refutes the writers, who would insert in the passage before us, personification, in place of personality. The refutation is in these words of our Lord, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, eateth me." (John vi., 54, 57.)

"My flesh and blood," and "Me," are here identical. If, therefore, "Me" means Wisdom, then "My flesh and blood" means Wisdom. But neither "flesh," nor "flesh and blood," ever in the Bible denote either wisdom or knowledge.

This fact utterly annihilates the theory of personification. The opposite conclusion is inevitable. Whoso eateth Christ, must eat and drink Him in his person, and not in a figure.

#### FLESH, AND FLESH AND BLOOD.

2. Now, we ask, what does our Lord, in the words we have just heard, mean by "flesh?" and what does He mean by "flesh and blood?"



(a.) By "flesh," he does not mean dead "flesh." In the New Testament, the word "flesh," in the singular, occurs one hundred and thirty-four times, and yet not in one place does "flesh" mean dead flesh.\*

(b.) Since our Lord by "flesh" does not mean dead flesh, what living flesh does he intend? He answers this question.

(aa.) When our Lord says, "No flesh should be saved" (Mark xiii., 20), we perceive that by "flesh," He means human being. "No human being should be saved."

(bb.) When our Lord says to Simon Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," (Matthew xvi., 17,) our Lord by "flesh and blood" means man. "Man hath not revealed it unto thee."

Thus our Lord defines His own terms, "flesh," and "flesh and blood"; designating by His expressions, "My flesh," and "My flesh and blood," his human nature.

(c.) By His words, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you," our Lord announces this great and fundamental truth of His Incarnation: My human nature confers life; both the resurrection-life of the body, and the life of holiness in the soul.

#### THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT.

4. We next encounter a declaration of our Lord,

\* In Revelation xviii., 19, the only instance, flesh (in the plural) means dead flesh.



which has, in all periods of the Church, greatly perplexed Biblical expositors.

“It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” (John vi., 63.)

In this sentence, I will first examine the second part, namely, “The flesh profiteth nothing.”

“The flesh” here means “My flesh.” This is our Lord’s own decision, as I will now show.

In a conversation with His disciples, He says, “My Father.” Philip says, “Show us the Father.” Our Lord answers, “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.” (John xiv., 7, 8, 9.) In this passage, “The Father,” is, beyond all question, the same as “My Father.”

In our Lord’s discourse, recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, there is exactly the same equivalence of expressions. Our Lord says, “My flesh” (v. 51). The Jews in reply say, “The flesh” (v. 52). In His answer our Lord says, “The flesh profiteth nothing.” Guided by our Lord’s words with Philip, we cannot be mistaken when we maintain that “The flesh,” in the phrase, “The flesh profiteth nothing,” is also, beyond all question, the same as “My flesh.”

We will now examine this declaration of our Lord, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth.”

What “Spirit” does our Lord here intend? There are four possible answers to this question. “Spirit” may denote either (*a*) any human spirit, or (*b*) Christ’s human spirit, or (*c*) His Divine Spirit, or (*d*) the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity.

(*a*.) The word “Spirit” cannot here denote any hu-



man spirit, as no human spirit can "quicken," that is, give spiritual life. (b.) Spirit here cannot denote Christ's human spirit. We have just proved that "The flesh," here contrasted with "The Spirit," is the same as "My flesh." But Christ's flesh is Christ's entire humanity, which, according to St. Paul's definition of a man, consists of "spirit, soul and body." (I. Thes., v., 23.) The human spirit of Christ cannot, therefore, be contrasted with the "flesh," because His human spirit is included in His flesh, and is a part of His flesh. (c.) "The Spirit" cannot here denote Christ's Divine Spirit. When our Lord calls a Person of the Trinity "the Spirit," He in every instance means the Holy Spirit.

Of this fact we are certain, when we hear our Lord's own words, "Born of the Spirit." (John iii., 6, 8.) "God giveth not the Spirit by measure" (v. 34.) "This spake He of the Spirit, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given" (vii., 39).

These are the only places, save the text we are now examining, ("It is the Spirit that quickeneth,") where our Lord uses, as a name of Deity, the phrase "the Spirit." The Evangelists and Apostles also invariably designate by the term, "the Spirit," the Holy Ghost, and not either the Father, or the Son.

The usage of the New Testament thus decides, beyond all doubt, that when our Lord says, "The Spirit quickeneth," He cannot refer to His own Divine Spirit.

(d.) We are thus driven to this position: By "the Spirit," the Holy Spirit is intended by our Lord, when He says, "The spirit quickeneth."

(e.) This explanation of the term, "the Spirit," is



confirmed by another fact. "He that quickeneth," that is, He that giveth spiritual life, is a name, which, in the sense of Giver of spiritual life, is never, in the New Testament, applied to our Lord. Whenever He is said to "quicken," the quickening is solely to bodily life. (John v., 21. I. Cor. xv., 22, 45.)

#### METAPHYSICAL THEOLOGY.

"My flesh profiteth nothing," as a quickener. This affirmation of our Lord forbids the formation of the metaphysical theology, which insists that the humanity of our Lord is, in itself, life-giving. In support of this assertion, this theology appeals to the power that went out of Him, when He healed "a certain woman," (Mark v., 30, Luke viii., 46,) and "multitudes" of others (vi., 19). But when we hear St. Peter say, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with Him," (Acts x., 38,) we perceive that this power was not itself inherent in Christ's human body, but was in Him as the gift and endowment of the Holy Ghost. Human dogmas cannot abrogate our Lord's own assertion, "My flesh profiteth nothing," as a quickener. His human nature does not of itself confer life. His "flesh and blood," His human nature, must, before it becomes life-giving, be itself "quickened by the Spirit," who is none other than the Holy Ghost.



## THE ADMINISTRATOR IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

“It is the spirit that quickeneth, My flesh profiteth nothing.” These words of our Lord decide another great question, Who is the administrator in the Lord's Supper?

The administrator is the Holy Spirit. The gospel is “the administration of the Spirit.” So St. Paul affirms. (II. Cor. iii., 8.) The Holy Spirit is the only administrator in baptism. “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” (I. Cor. xii., 13.)

Since the Holy Spirit is, without limitation, the administrator of the gospel, since He is the sole administrator of the sacrament of baptism, since also our Lord declares, “The Holy Spirit quickeneth, My flesh profiteth nothing,” this truth is most firmly established, the Holy Spirit is likewise the sole administrator in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

## PRESENCE OF NATURE, AND PRESENCE OF OFFICE.

Christ is indeed both God and man; and yet, Christ did not baptize Himself. The Holy Spirit baptized the man Jesus. This fact in our Lord's life exhibits a distinction in the Trinity between presence of nature, and presence of office.

The same distinction does our Lord exhibit in this affirmation, which is applicable to His Supper. “The Holy Spirit quickeneth, My flesh profiteth nothing.” The bread and wine represent merely Christ's “flesh,” His human nature. In the Lord's Supper, the Holy Spirit is the administrator. The Deity of Christ is no



more in His Supper, than it was in His own baptism. His Deity is no more in His Supper, than it now is in the sacrament of baptism. In neither sacrament is He officially present. In neither sacrament does He demand of us adoration of a non-entity, His official presence.

#### THINGS, NOT WORDS.

I pass to the last expression I select from our Lord's discourse at Capernaum, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

In this sentence, two equivocal words require explanation.

(a). "Speak," here means, to speak of, to treat of, and not merely to utter words.\*

(b). The Greek term here translated "words," is elsewhere more correctly rendered "things." (Luke ii., 19.) Not bare words is our Lord uttering in John, chapter vi., verse 63, but of things is He discoursing. The things He speaks of are "the flesh," His human nature, and His "flesh quickened by the Holy Spirit."

These "things," He assures us, "are spirit," are spirit-power, and "are life," are life-power. Power is the peculiar characteristic of spirit and of life. So St. Paul teaches, when he says, "Spirit of power." (II. Tim. i., 7.) "Power of life." (Heb vii., 16.) The human nature of our Lord, quickened by the Holy Spirit, is spirit-power, is life-power. "My flesh will I give for the life of the world." (John vi., 51.) "Christ crucified is the power of God." (I. Cor, i., 23, 24.)

\* Spake of him. (John vii., 13.)



## II.

We are next to examine our Lord's words at the time He instituted the sacrament of His body and blood. "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to the disciples, and said, take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: This do in remembrance of me. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, drink all ye of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for the many, for the remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi., 26—28; I. Cor. xi., 24.)

1. "Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave to the disciples, and said, take, eat."

## OUR LORD'S BLESSING.

Our Lord blessed. What was the nature and effect of His blessing?

(a). We must not fail to observe that St. Matthew does not say, our Lord blessed the bread. On the contrary, when this Evangelist speaks of the wine, he says, "Jesus took the cup, and gave thanks." Our Lord's blessing and thanksgiving in His supper were, then, the same thing. St. Matthew's explanation of our Lord's act of blessing is the very explanation St. Luke gives. "He took bread and gave thanks," (Luke xxii., 19,) and also St. Paul, "The Lord Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake." (I. Cor. xi., 24.) No New Testament writer says that our Lord blessed the bread.



We can now see the nature of Christ's blessing, when He instituted the sacrament of His body and blood. He blessed God, and not the bread, and gave God thanks.

(*b*). Of the effect of Christ's blessing and thanksgiving, not a word is uttered in the New Testament. Where the Scriptures are absolutely silent, no man is at liberty to dogmatize, least of all to construct a system of sacramental theology. The bread was not blessed in the supper. No change whatever, at the time, did the bread experience, except to become representative. In New Testament Greek, the word "bless" never means consecrate, much less, make holy.

#### FLESH AND BLOOD, AND BODY AND BLOOD.

2. At Capernaum our Lord calls Himself "flesh and blood." In Jerusalem, at the institution of His Supper, He calls Himself "body and blood." How do the names differ? "Flesh and blood" is our Lord's human nature alive. "Body and blood" is His human nature slain as an atoning sacrifice for sin, and therefore dead. Under the old covenant each beast, whose blood was brought into the sanctuary for sin, was "body and blood." (Heb. xiii., 11.) In the new covenant Jesus, "the one sacrifice for sins" (Heb. x., 12), takes the place of the sacrificed beasts" (v. 13). Because He is this substituted sacrifice, He calls Himself "body and blood," when he thus says, This is my body which is broken for you. This is my blood, which is shed for the many, for the remission of sins. "Christ's body and blood," is "Christ crucified" and dead.



## THE PRESENT TENSE.

3. "Is broken, is shed." Does the present tense decide that the breaking and the shedding were at that very instant? Our Lord answers this question in the negative. Foretelling His crucifixion "two days" before the event, He says, "The son of man is delivered." (Matt. xxvi., 2.) He uses the present tense for the certain future. The breaking and the shedding our Lord decides did not occur at the instant He said, "Is broken, is shed," but two days after!

## REPRESENTATION.

4. When our Lord affirms of the bread, "This is my body," and of the wine, "This is my blood," does the word *is* denote representation? or describe identity? We refer the decision of this controverted question to our Lord Himself.

In His parable of the tares, He utters these declarations: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; The enemy that sowed the tares is the devil; The harvest is the end of the world." (Matt. xiii., 37—39.)

To these declarations our Lord immediately adds this decisive explanation, which immoveably attaches to the sower of the good seed, to the field, to the enemy sowing tares, and to the harvest, the character of representation.

"As the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be at the end of the world." (Verse 40.)



The particles “ as ” and “ so,” here used by our Lord, designate representation. According, then, to His own language and decision, The sower of the good seed represents the Son of man ; The field represents the world ; The enemy sowing tares represents the devil ; The harvest represents the end of the world. Since, then, The sower of the good seed, The field, The enemy sowing tares, and The harvest, is each, in its character, representative, the word “ is ” becomes, in each sentence, also representative, and can bear no other meaning than represents.

Thus, beyond all contradiction, this is an established fact : It is our Lord’s own usage to employ the word “ is ” to designate representation.

Does our Lord use the word “ is ” in the same sense, when He says, in instituting His Supper, “ This is my body, This is my blood ” ?

The following facts answer most decidedly, our Lord does thus use the word.

(*a.*) A word, when defined by New Testament usage, carries its definition into every other place where the word occurs, unless the context refuses to accept the definition.

In Matt. xxvi., 26—28, the context does not refuse to accept represents as the meaning of “ is.” “ This is my body.” This represents my body. “ This is my blood.” This represents my blood.

#### THE LORD’S SUPPER A PARABLE.

(*b.*) Instead of refusal of the context to accept represents as the meaning of “ is,” in Matt. xxvi., 26—28,



the parabolic character of our Lord's words, when instituting His Supper, admit no other sense than represents.

But you may ask, What reasons are there for regarding our Lord's words in the institution of His Supper, a parable?

(*aa.*) St. Paul calls the sacrifice of Isaac a parable. (Heb. xi., 19.) The sacrifice of Isaac is a parable, because it represents the sacrifice of Christ. The bread and the wine also represent the sacrifice of Christ. In this representation they resemble the sacrifice of Isaac, and become like it, a parable.

Most parables consist solely of words. But in the parable of Isaac, there are actions, as well as words. The institution of the "sacrament of our redemption," is a similar parable. Our Lord acts, as well as speaks. The transaction becomes an acted parable. His actions are representative. The bread He takes in His hands represents Himself, as "the bread of life," that is, as the author of bodily and spiritual life. The bread broken represents His body "wounded" on the cross "for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities." (Isa. liii., 5.) The wine poured out represents His "blood shed for the remission of our sins."

(*bb.*) While the Holy Supper is thus a peculiar parable, because both spoken and acted, the Supper is also an example. When our Lord had washed His disciples' feet, He said, "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done." (John xiii., 15.) This washing and these words followed immediately after the institution of the Supper. One representative act fol-



lows another and explains it. Thus following the Supper, these words of our Lord, when washing the disciples' feet, explain His language when in the Supper He says, "This do." That is, "Do as I have done." After my example, "take bread, give thanks, break and eat." After my example, "take the cup, give thanks, and drink all ye. This do, in remembrance of me."

(cc.) The explanations I have now given of the parabolic nature of the representations in the Lord's Supper, and also of the meaning of His direction, "This do," are fully justified by this declaration of St. Paul, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." (I. Cor. xi., 26.) The Greek word here translated "show," is elsewhere in the New Testament rendered "preach." We may, therefore, use "preach," instead of "show," in St. Paul's declaration. Thus: "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do preach the Lord's death till He come." But eating and drinking is not preaching by words. Eating and drinking is "preaching" by actions. Eating and drinking is "preaching" by example, by representation. The Lord's Supper is thus made by St. Paul an acted parable, a parabolic representation. Our Lord's actions in His Supper form "an example," a representation, which He leaves His disciples to follow in all ages, till He shall come again to judge the world.

The Scriptures I have just explained form this conclusive demonstration: As our Lord, in His spoken parable of the tares, fastens unalterably upon the word "is" the meaning of represents, so in His acted parable



of the bread and wine, He stamps indelibly upon the word "is" precisely the same signification of represents.

The bread and wine represent merely and exclusively the human nature of our Lord. This is His own teaching. This was the teaching of the early church. This is the teaching the church is bound to proclaim both now and ever.

#### THE FALSE DOGMA.

Not until the fifth century was there a different dogma. In this century, Gelasius I., Bishop of Rome, formally declared that the bread and wine represent both natures of our Lord, His Humanity, and His Deity.

These are the words of Gelasius:

*Panis et vinum, in actione mysteriorum, representant Christum integrum verumque.* The bread and wine, in the action of the mysteries, represent Christ entire and real.\*

This historical fact is most important. The fact discloses the spring-head of the deductive theology, which connects our Lord's Deity with the material elements in His Supper. By this assumed connection, the inferential dogmatism, issuing from the Papal throne, creates the flowing stream of human error, which under the different names of Primitive Liturgy, Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, Objective Presence, Eucharistic Adoration, and Worship of the Host, still poisons, distracts, rends, and afflicts the Church.

\*Biblia Patrum Maxima, VIII., 703. Liber de Duabus Naturis Christi.

Rev. Henry Card. Lord's Supper, p. 43.



When we find the beginning of this dogmatic evil, we also find the exact place where we are to begin to avoid and oppose the huge system of monstrous assumptions.\*

#### OUR LORD'S PRESENCE IN HIS SUPPER.

We may now consider the manner of our Lord's presence in His Supper.

At the institution of the Lord's Supper, His disciples must have partaken of the objects represented by the bread and wine. These objects He calls "His broken body and His shed blood." But at this first partaking of the bread and wine, His body was not broken, and His blood was not shed. The disciples, therefore, could have received only in one way objects existing merely in God's purpose. They could receive only the efficacy of Christ's broken body, and of His shed blood. This efficacy was no new power. It existed from the fall of Adam. Christ is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. xiii., 8.) His sacrifice, thus coeval with human transgression, was efficacious in all subsequent time for the pardon of sin.

\* "The worship due to Christ, as present, 'under the form of bread and wine,' were not part of our Lord's original appointment (as the 28th Article observes), but were deductions from the truths revealed respecting this sacrament, into which the Church was guided by the Holy Ghost."—*Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist, by Robert-Isaac Wilberforce, Arch-deacon of the East Riding. P. 264. London, 1853.*

The reader will not fail to most carefully mark this language.

1. This admission, "the worship due to Christ, as present, 'under the form of bread and wine,' were *not* part of our Lord's original appointment."

2. This assertion, "But were *deductions* from the truths revealed respecting this sacrament."

3. This essence of Romanism, "Into which deductions the Church was guided by the Holy Ghost."

4. This baseless assumption, "The Church was guided by the Holy Ghost into deductions from truths revealed."



That the disciples did actually receive this efficacy, is proved by this language of His, "My blood is shed for the remission of sins." This efficacy the disciples must have received when they ate the representative bread, and drank the representative wine, or there was no real representation.

The first Lord's Supper is the model of every repetition of His Supper. As, at the first Supper, the efficacy of Christ's broken body and shed blood was received, so in every subsequent Supper, has the efficacy of His broken body and shed blood been received, by communicants possessing the requisite relations and dispositions. St. Paul says expressly, "Christ crucified is the power of God," and power is efficacy. (I. Cor., i., 23, 24.) But what is "Christ crucified"? Christ crucified is "His body and blood." Since, then, according to St. Paul, "Christ crucified" and "Christ's body and blood" are the same, His body and blood is the power of God, is the efficacy of God. Consequently the power, the efficacy of Christ's body and blood is the object, both represented and received, in the Lord's Supper.

No one, I presume, finds difficulty in admitting, that "Christ crucified" is "the power of God." No one should find difficulty in admitting, that "Christ's body and blood," (which is the same as "Christ crucified,") is "the power of God."

How, moreover, Christ's body and blood is the power of God, St. Paul, in this same chapter of I. Corinthians, distinctly tells us: "Christ Jesus becomes from God to us (who are believers, v. 21), wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." (I. Cor. i., 30.)



Christ's wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption are forms and manifestations of God's power. Our reception of these blessings depends upon two instrumentalities, the operation of God, and our faith. So St. Paul teaches in his words just repeated: "From God to us who are believers Christ Jesus becomes wisdom, and righteousness, sanctification and redemption."

Upon the very same instrumentalities, depends our reception, in His Supper, of the power of Christ crucified. "The Spirit quickeneth." "Every one who believeth on the Son may have everlasting life." (John vi., 47.) Apart from the quickening Spirit, Christ's body and blood are not the power of God. Apart from our faith, there is no reception of this power.

The body and blood of Christ, which are identical with His crucified human nature, do not form in the Supper a divine and invisible substance, to be adored and worshipped. The human nature of Christ is not in the Supper, except by representation, but His life-giving, atoning and holy humanity is really in the hearts of believing recipients, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

### III.

#### BLESSING AND COMMUNION.

The complement of our Lord's words, to which we have been listening, is this language of His Apostle St. Paul: "The cup of blessing, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of



Christ"? (I. Cor., xi., 16.) This language requires careful explanation.

(a.) The two questions are strong affirmations.

(b.) "The cup of blessing," is the cup representing blessing.

(c.) "The cup which we bless," by invoking God's blessing.

In Bible Greek, as I have already said, the word "bless" has, in no instance, the sense of consecrate, much less, make holy.

(d.) "The Communion." Not the communication, but the partaking. The Greek word here translated "communion," never, in the New Testament, means communication. The elements of bread and wine do not communicate the body and blood of Christ. Partaking is the sense the context gives the word "communion." "Partakers of the Lord's table." (I. Cor. x., 21.) By the appointment of our Lord, and by the action of the Holy Spirit, we partake of "the power of Christ crucified," the efficacy of His body and blood. Most faithful to the Greek is our Church, when explaining "communion" by "partaking," in her 28th Article of Religion. "Communion" is passive reception.

#### LAYMEN NOT ADMINISTRATORS.

(e.) The "bread we break." We break. We, Apostles, break. The Apostles' breaking of bread is, in the Book of the Acts, mentioned by St. Luke, in his description of the original constitution of the Church of Christ. "The baptized continued steadfastly in the



Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." (Acts ii., 42.) The law of Greek construction demands this translation of the passage: They continued steadfastly in the doctrine of the Apostles, and in their fellowship, and in their breaking of bread, and in their prayers.\* This expression, "We break," used by St. Paul, cannot warrant lay administration of the eucharist. Not an instance is there in the New Testament, where the laity "break the bread" in the Lord's Supper.

#### DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY.

Another sacramental expression of St. Paul must not escape our notice.

(a.) "Not discerning the Lord's body." (I. Cor. xi., 29.) In order to understand this language, we must not forget that "The Lord's body" is The Lord's crucified and dead body.

(b.) Next we must not fail to find the exact meaning of the word "discerning."

To do this, we must interpret St. Paul by himself. Nowhere does he use the verb here translated "discern" in the sense of discerning by faith. On the contrary, in I. Cor. iv., 7, he uses this verb in this sense, "Maketh to differ." But Make to differ, is the same as Make a difference between, that is, To distinguish.

Thus St. Paul gives us the true sense of "Discerning the Lord's body." "Discerning the Lord's body," is Distinguishing His sacrificed body from a human body

\* Compare Heb. vi., 10, I. Thes. i., 3, II. Tim. iii., 10, 11.



dead, but not offered as a sacrifice for sin. “Not discerning the Lord’s body” is, then, Not to see the difference between His body broken on the cross, and His blood shed for the remission of our sins, and the body of a Christian martyr; for instance: The body of the Apostle James, beheaded by the sword of Herod. (Acts xii., 1.)

St. Paul’s own definition of “Not discerning the Lord’s body,” explains other sacramental language of this Apostle.

#### UNWORTHY COMMUNING.

(a.) Eating and drinking the Lord’s Supper “unworthily” is, To eat and drink without the belief, that Christ’s death was an atoning sacrifice. (Verse 29.)

(b.) Such an unworthy partaker is “guilty of the body and blood of the Lord,” (verse 27), because by his unbelief he ranks himself with the crucifiers of Christ. “He that is not with me, is against me.” (Matt. xii., 30.)

#### NATURE OF THE LORD’S SUPPER.

What, we may now ask, is the Lord’s Supper?

1. The Lord’s Supper is a Memorial of His love and sacrifice.

2. The Lord’s Supper is a Representation of His life, and of His death upon the cross, for the remission of our sins.

3. The Lord’s Supper is a Means of Grace, both outward and inward. Outward, in the bread and wine. Inward, in the presence and power of the Holy Ghost.



This is the temple of truth respecting the Lord's Supper we attempt to build out of the foundation rocks and precious stones contained in the New Testament.

No other temple than this may we construct. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid." (I. Cor. iii., 11.) The principles of interpretation in this discourse are unalterable and imperishable. The Greek laws of exegesis are as stable and enduring as "the everlasting hills." (Gen. xlix., 26.) "My words shall not pass away." (Matt. xxiv., 35.)

Of priceless value is the actual and habitual reception of the Supper of the Lord. To believing communicants the Holy Spirit conveys, at the time, all the blessings the sacrament represents.

"We believe in the communion of saints." United to Christ, we are united to His entire Church, both in this world, and in Paradise. This hope cheers and comforts us, as to-day we review the affecting history of this parish, and recall the many loved ones, once here with us, but now gone before. We join all saints, the living and the departed, in their unceasing thanks and praise, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever." Glory forever to Christ for His love! Glory forever to Christ for His blood-washing! The dominion of Christ in our hearts, and over our lives—be this dominion forever and forever!

AMEN.











The Rt. Rev. Thos. M. Clark, D. D., LL. D.

ENTERED UPON THE RECTORSHIP OF GRACE CHURCH, MARCH 1ST, 1855,  
SHORTLY AFTER HIS CONSECRATION TO THE EPISCOPATE.

BISHOP CLARK, RESIGNED THE RECTORSHIP  
IN SEPTEMBER, 1866.







# HISTORICAL DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

THE SEMI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION, GRACE CHURCH,

*Providence, R. I., Saturday Evening, May 17th, 1879.*

BY THE RIGHT REV. THOMAS M. CLARK, D. D., LL. D.







## HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

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Fifty years ago the town of Providence contained about 16,800 inhabitants, and was organized under a city charter three years later in 1832. There were thirteen religious societies in existence, four of the Baptist denomination, four Congregational, one Friends' Meeting, one Methodist, one Universalist, one Roman Catholic, and one Episcopal Church. On the 2nd of May, 1829, a number of gentlemen assembled for the purpose of organizing a Protestant Episcopal Church on the west side of the river. "The Rev. Nathan B. Crocker, Rector of St. John's Church, presided, and a Committee was appointed to take such action as might be necessary in order to carry the purpose contemplated into effect. At an adjourned meeting, this Committee reported that a suitable building could be secured, at a rent of \$250 per annum, and it was determined to begin the services of the new parish there. This edifice, erected in 1795 for the use of a new Congregational Society, is still standing in Richmond street, and has been occupied by several infant parishes. At present it is devoted to a very different use.



Measures were then taken to secure subscriptions for the support of public worship, and three gentlemen were designated "to supply the pulpit with men of talents and true piety." In his parochial report presented to the Diocesan Convention on the 9th of June, 1829, the Rector of St. John's Church says: "We should do violence to our feelings, and incur the charge of indifference to measures which are supposed to promise efficient aid to the cause of piety and Episcopacy, were we not to say that sundry individuals of this Church have organized an Episcopal Society on the west side of the river. Their delegates are now here, and claim to be admitted as its legal representatives in this Convention. We trust that it will be your pleasure to recognize and honor their claim, when they shall have shown by their articles of association, or otherwise, that the Constitution of the Episcopal Church in this State is acceded to by the Society they represent." It was a graceful thing on the part of the late Dr. Crocker, thus to introduce the deputies of this new parish to the Convention, for it is not always the case that the Mother Church in our towns and cities looks with much favor upon the setting up of her children in establishments of their own, and very probably some of the parishioners of old St. John's regarded the formation of a new parish as an act of superfluous zeal.

On the 26th of May, Grace Church was formally organized, a charter adopted, and a Vestry chosen. The charter was soon after granted by the Legislature, limiting the amount of property to be held by the Corporation to the sum of \$75,000. On the 9th of June, an



organist was appointed, at a salary of \$60 per annum, a stipend which, in our day, would hardly suffice to procure the services of a first-class performer. An attempt was made to secure Bishop Griswold as the first Rector of the parish, which, for some reason, failed.

The names of all who were enlisted in these primary movements, with a single exception, have ceased to appear on the roll of the living. Identified, as many of them were, with the best interests of the State, as well as the Church, their memory will live for many generations, and so long as these walls stand, the names of those who founded this parish will be revered and hallowed here.

On the 17th of May, 1829, just fifty years ago to-day, Bishop Griswold officiated at the first public service held under the auspices of the new parish. During the ensuing summer, the Church was supplied by a variety of clergymen, and in October the Rev. William Richmond was invited to the Rectorship, which offer he declined. The Rev. Samuel Fuller, Jr., was then called, on a salary of \$600, with the assurance that "the same shall be increased when the means of the Society may warrant it." The fact that, in the following December the salary was considerably increased, is a testimony to the success and faithfulness of his early ministry. It is a source of peculiar gratification that the first Rector of the Church should be present with us to-day, and that his voice should be heard, clear and strong, on the occasion of our semi-centennial jubilee. The hand of time has rested gently upon him through this long half century, and he comes to us, after a life of active and unre-



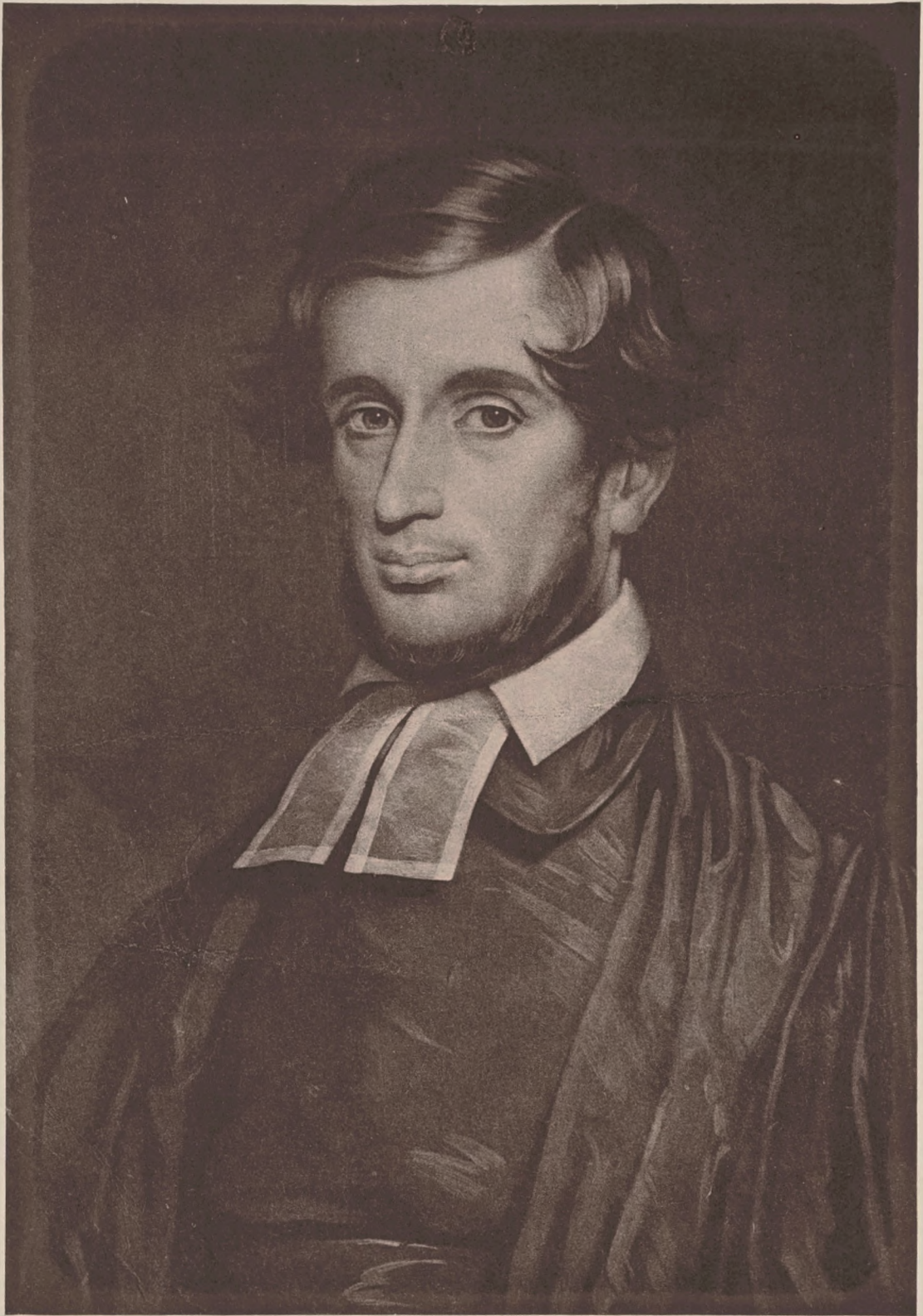
mitted toil, in full vigor of both mind and body, to contribute his part to the solemn services of this interesting occasion. May the period of his usefulness be still protracted for many a year. It may here be noted that the Rev. Joseph H. Price, who officiated for some time in Grace Church, during the interim between the election of Dr. Fuller to the Rectorship, and the date when he entered upon his duties here, and who afterwards had a long and honorable ministry in the city of New York, is also still living, and although he has resigned the Church in which he served so long, has never ceased to take a living interest in whatever pertains to the interests of the Kingdom of Christ. In May, 1831, the Rev. Mr. Fuller resigned his Rectorship, and another unsuccessful attempt was made to secure the services of Bishop Griswold. The records show that the Rev. George F. Haskins followed Mr. Fuller, and remained in charge of the Church for about one year. Soon after this he entered the Roman Catholic Church, and was for a long time in charge of an ecclesiastical institution in South Boston.

In January, 1832, a movement was made to secure a permanent house of worship. Attention was directed to the old Providence Theatre, erected in 1795, at the corner of Westminster and Mathewson streets, and arrangements were soon made for its purchase. The building was then entirely transformed in its appearance, and converted into a convenient and seemly Gothic edifice, with a spacious basement room for the use of the Sunday School, and for other general services. On the 15th of November, 1832, the church was conse-



















crated by Bishop Griswold. The entire cost of the building, including land, was about \$17,000, and instead of the parish finding itself encumbered by a debt, the pews were at once sold for \$21,000, \$4,000 more than the cost of the edifice.

From this date the day of large things may be said to commence in Grace Church. The Rev. John A. Clark now entered upon his Rectorship, and although he remained in charge but three years, there were during this period not less than 220 baptisms, and 218 persons were confirmed. The number of communicants increased from 42 to 261. The church was soon crowded with worshippers, and the pulse of religious life beat strong and hard. The intense enthusiasm of the minister communicated itself to the people of his charge, and was felt as a living power throughout the whole community. The harvest so richly and rapidly reaped, came for the most part from material gathered in from regions outside the Episcopal Church, and from this period we date the large increase in the strength of our Communion in the city and the Diocese. It was a heavy blow to this Parish when Dr. Clark left for St. Andrew's, Philadelphia, to succeed the eloquent Bedell, and take up the great work which he had left to be carried on by his successor. The failing health of Dr. Clark obliged him to lay aside his public work in February, 1843, and during the following winter he died. It was my lot to succeed him in St. Andrew's Church, and also to commit his body to the dust, under the shadow of the church he loved and served so well.

After his departure from Providence, the Rev. Alex-



ander H. Vinton was called to the Rectorship of this Church, and declined. The invitation being renewed, it was at length accepted, and Mr. Vinton entered on his duties as Rector in April, 1836. He came here after a short term of service in old St. Paul's Church, Portland, Maine, where, by a somewhat singular coincidence, I was sent to succeed him, as I afterwards followed the Rev. Dr. Clark, Rector of St. Andrew's, Philadelphia. Dr. Vinton's ministry in Grace Church continued for nearly six years, during which time the parish became thoroughly consolidated and strengthened in all its parts. As he is still with us, I cannot say of him and his work all that I certainly would be glad to say if he were not alive to hear it. The time has not come to pronounce his eulogy, and God grant that it may be long deferred.

After the resignation of Dr. Vinton, the Rev. Edward W. Peet, who is still living in the city of New York, was in charge of the Church until Easter, 1843.

The Eastern Diocese, which at one time comprised all the New England States, with the exception of Connecticut, having been dissolved at the death of Bishop Griswold, Rhode Island now became an independent Diocese, and elected as its first Bishop the Rev. Dr. John Prentiss Kewley Henshaw, of Baltimore. The same gentleman was also invited to the Rectorship of this Church, and was instituted August 10th, 1843, on the day before his Consecration as Bishop. After an active and laborious service of nine years, he rested from his labors on the 20th of July, 1852. The church in which we are now assembled, is his monument. There











The Rt. Rev. J. P. K. Benshaw, D. D.

WAS CONSECRATED TO THE EPISCOPATE,

AUGUST 11TH, 1843.

HE BECAME IMMEDIATELY THEREAFTER THE RECTOR OF GRACE CHURCH,

AND CONTINUED IN THAT OFFICE UNTIL HIS DECEASE,

JULY 20TH, 1852.







are few who know how hard he toiled, and what self-denials and trials he endured, in order to advance its erection, and more especially after it was built, to rescue it from being alienated from our Communion. The cost of the structure, as it then stood, was \$63,000. It was only by labors in season and out of season, in place and out of place, that he saved this church from being sold under the hammer of the auctioneer. This was but one of the good works that he did during his Rectorship; of what he accomplished on the broader field of the Diocese, I have spoken in another place. Although called to do double work, and having much to occupy him in the Diocese, no parishioner had occasion to complain of his neglect, and no parish duty was ever slighted.

After Bishop Henshaw's decease, the Rev. Henry Burroughs, now Rector of Christ Church, Boston, was in charge of the Church until the 1st of March, 1855, when I assumed the duties of the place. At this time, there had been in all 650 baptisms, 209 marriages, 272 burials, and 499 persons confirmed.

My Rectorship continued until September 1, 1866, when it was resigned, as provision had now been made for the independent support of the Episcopate, and the increasing demands of the Diocese were enough to occupy all my time. During this period, the church was completed by the erection of the stone spire, and a chime of bells was secured by general subscription, and placed in the tower. A spacious chapel was also erected in the rear of the church, with all the arrangements requisite for carrying on the Sunday School work



of the parish. For several years, the only building available for this purpose was a small and unattractive structure, at a little distance from the church; and the rapid growth of all branches of the School after our removal into the new chapel, amply justified the expense incurred in this movement. All these improvements were completed without imposing any debt upon the Parish.

Among those who were employed as Assistant Ministers during this period, I may mention the Rev. John Franklin Spalding, who is now the honored Bishop of Colorado; while there were others, who, in their sphere, have done honor to the Master whom they serve. After my resignation of the Rectorship, on the 1st of September, 1866, the Rev. D. O. Kellogg, Jr., was settled here. He left in the summer of 1870, and the Rev. C. G. Currie became his successor, and he resigned in July, 1872. During the Ministry of both these gentlemen, the prosperity of the Church continued without abatement.

On the 15th of September, 1872, the Rev. D. H. Greer entered upon the duties of the Rectorship, and has continued with us up to the present time. During his ministry, this Church has reached its highest point of advancement. The size of the congregation is limited only by the accommodations of the building, the number of communicants is larger than it ever was before, and the amount of money contributed far in advance of anything previously known. A beautiful Rectory has recently been built, and, so far as matters external are concerned, the only thing remaining to be







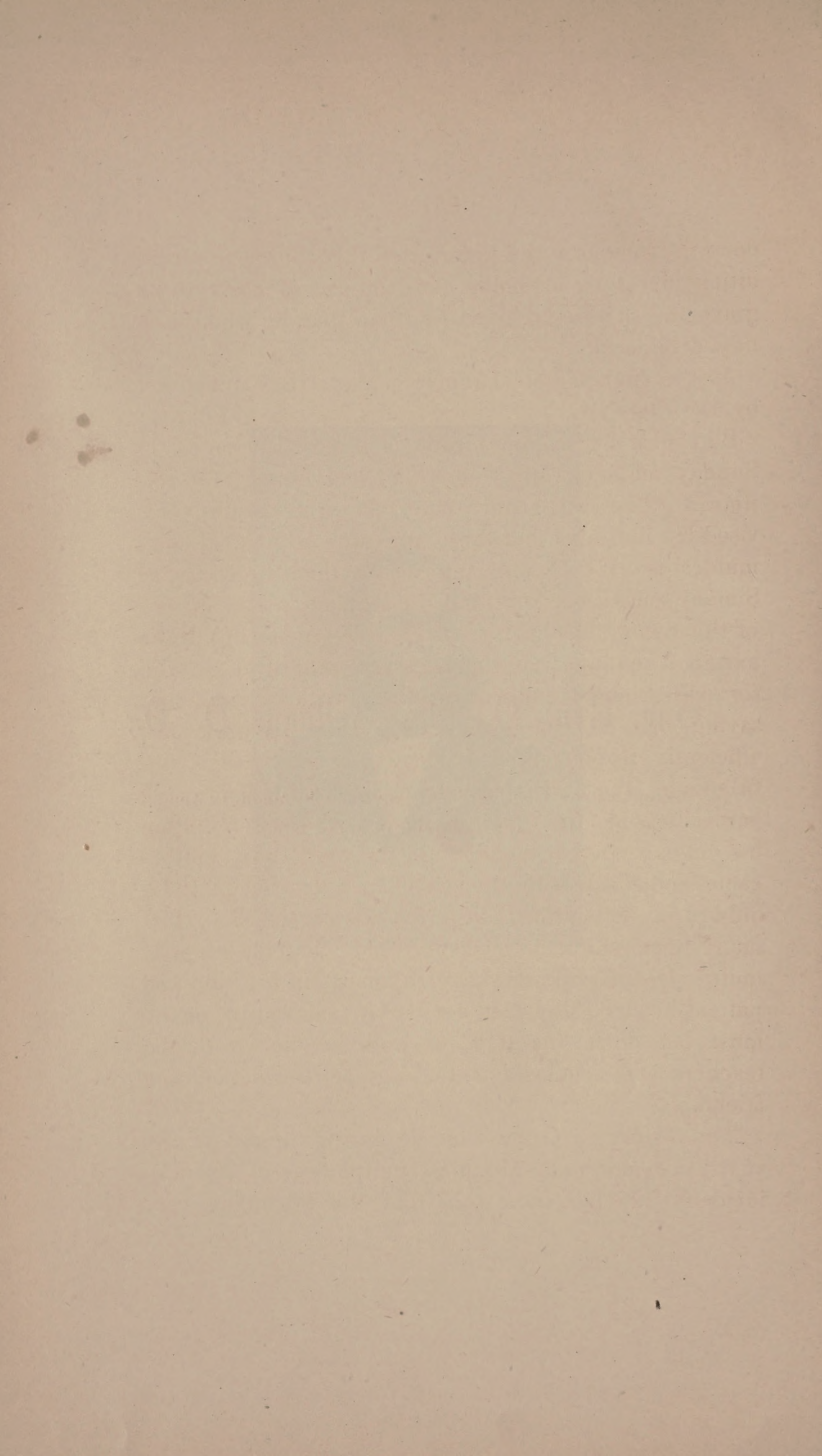




The Rev. D. Otis Kellogg, D. D.,

ENTERED UPON THE RECTORSHIP OF GRACE CHURCH, IN APRIL,  
1867, AND RESIGNED IN JULY, 1870.







done, is, to restore the interior of this church to a condition and tone of color more in accordance with its grave and sombre architecture, than that by which it is now disfigured.

In the first parochial report made to the Convention by the Rev. Mr. Fuller, the statistics are as follows: "Baptisms, 2; communicants (supposed) about 30; Sunday scholars, 50; Sunday School library, 60 volumes." The last report states that the carefully revised list indicates that there are now 640 actual communicants; and it also informs us that there are 33 Sunday School teachers, and 450 scholars. The success of this School has been in a great degree owing to the excellent qualifications and earnest zeal of those who serve as teachers, and they will unite with me in further saying, that all which they have done has been most efficiently supplemented and strengthened by the faithful energy, the untiring courteousness, and indefatigable earnestness of Mr. S. C. Kingsley, who entered upon his duties as Superintendent in the year 1852, and became connected with the school as a teacher in 1832, only three years after the Church was organized. How many Rectorships he has survived! The blessings of multitudes of children have fallen upon his kind and patient head! May the day be far removed, when he must lay down his staff, to walk no more with the teachers and scholars, as their guide, counsellor, and friend.

The history of Grace Church during these past fifty years, does not offer anything in the way of startling incident; all has gone on from the beginning very



evenly and quietly. It has been a steady and orderly growth, first the blade, then the ear, and after that the full corn in the ear. There have been no contentions among the people, and no quarrels between the Rector and the congregation. There have been some days that were darker than others, but the light soon came, and the clouds were scattered. A more united people could hardly be found. The words spoken from the pulpit have always been kindly received, and the voice of truculent criticism has rarely, if ever, been heard here. The Church has always been at peace with all its neighbors, Episcopal and non-Episcopal, and when, some years ago, we were unable for a while to hold services here, because of a fire, which was happily arrested before much damage was done, our next door friends of the Unitarian Congregational Society kindly put their house of worship at our disposal, and, having at the time no minister of their own, contented themselves with such services as we could give them.

Great changes have occurred in the general aspect of affairs in our Communion here in Providence since the day when Grace Church was founded. In 1839, St. Stephen's Church was established on the east side of the river, and after abiding for twenty-four years in the house where their first services were held, the congregation erected a new and beautiful edifice on George street. The Rev. Dr. Waterman, for so many years the revered and loved Rector, was baptized in Grace Church, and may be regarded as a child of this parish. In 1844, what is now known as All Saints' Memorial Church, was started, under another name, in a remote part of the



city, and after one or two successive steps of advancement, planted itself on a conspicuous street, and built there a church, which is a model of beauty and strength. In 1856, the Church of the Messiah came into being; then followed in 1860, the Church of the Redeemer; in 1863, the Church of the Saviour; in 1865, Christ Church; in 1869, St. James's Church; and in 1871, St. Gabriel's Church. In addition to these ten organized parishes, regular services are held in the hall occupied by the Church of the Epiphany, and in St. Thomas's Chapel, Eagle Park.

The change in the Diocese is not less striking. In 1829, there were only five parish clergymen here, and one other engaged in teaching; and five Churches, containing in all about 563 communicants. We have now forty-seven clergy, forty-four parishes, and nearly 6,000 communicants. In our Sunday Schools, we number 730 teachers, and 6,331 scholars. All that is said of the contributions of the Diocese in the Journal of 1829, is found in the statement of the Rhode Island Episcopal Missionary Society, which reports that \$52.50 have been received from book shares, of which \$4.50 has been paid to the General Convention, and \$48 carried to the new account. The total of contributions in 1878, as given in our last Convention Journal, is \$139,570. It is very possible, that, half a century ago, an amount of money found its way, through various channels, into the treasury of the Church proportionally equal to what is now given; but there are no statistics, either in our Diocesan Journal, or in the Journal of the General Convention, that throw any light upon the matter. In



the report on the state of the Church made by Rhode Island to the General Convention which met in 1829, no statistics of any sort are given, except that two new parishes have been organized during the preceding three years.

The growth of the Episcopal Church at large, since Grace Church was started, may properly receive a moment's attention. In 1829, there were nine Bishops in attendance at the General Convention, and seventeen Dioceses were represented. We have now sixty-three Bishops, 3,204 Clergy, 3,002 Parishes, forty-eight organized Dioceses, and twelve Missionary Districts.

It is just about half a century ago that our Church in this country began to put on her strength and enlarge her borders. The remarkable report presented to the General Convention in 1829, by the Rev. Alonzo Potter, afterwards Bishop of Pennsylvania, indicates how the Church was then beginning cautiously to feel her way in the direction of that work for the discharge of which Christ originally commissioned His Apostles. It is full of that wise caution that always characterized the words and acts of this remarkable man; but, considering what had then been done in the way of missions, by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, it is somewhat strange to come upon a passage like this in the report: "On looking over the past efforts of the Society, the Committee are forcibly impressed with the belief that these efforts have been spread over too large a surface; that they have been divided between too many and various objects." All that had been done in the department of foreign missions, and all that



the Society proposed to do, is summed up in the following sentences: "It has already two stations among the Aborigines of our own country. There is one Missionary on the shores of the Mediterranean; and it is understood that the earliest opportunity will be taken to dispatch another to Liberia."

Last year the whole amount of money distributed by our General Domestic and Foreign Boards is thus reported: Domestic, \$129,325; Foreign, \$139,971; Indians, \$34,555; Freedmen, \$14,300.

The infusion of missionary and evangelic life, which, forty or fifty years ago, began to operate within the Church, and the general awakening that it kindled, drew the attention of many to our Communion, who had been accustomed to regard the Episcopal Church with indifference, if not with hostility. In this part of the country, more especially, there were several things which combined to excite an interest in this Church, which had never been felt before.

The stability of our Creed attracted many, who were becoming alarmed by the tendencies towards doctrinal disintegration, that were manifesting themselves in the religious bodies with which they had been connected. They wanted a liberal Christianity, but they also felt the need of a Christianity resting upon some fixed historical basis, and which recognized in some form the element of Divinity in the Being from whom their religion derived its name. They wanted some assurance as to what their children would be taught, after they were gone; and although there might be certain things between the two covers of our Prayer Book which they



neither loved or believed, they were willing to take it as a whole, rather than be left in the open sea, without rudder, or chart, or pilot. This feeling brought many into the fold, who have since become Hebrews of the Hebrews, and vaulted into very high places.

Other classes of Christians were attracted to this Church by the *freedom* of her creeds, and because they could be admitted to her communion without assenting to any elaborate and fine-spun formularies of doctrine, any philosophical theory of inspiration, or depravity, or atonement, or decrees, or eternal punishment. Some were also repelled from their old connection by the introduction of altogether new conditions of communion—anti-masonic, anti-slavery, anti-narcotics, total abstinence, and the like. They were not ready to surrender the rights of individual conscience, in respect of conduct, or of private judgment, in respect of the minutiae of doctrine, and so they came to us for liberty.

Very many were attracted to the Episcopal Church by its liturgical worship. Since that time, other denominations of Christians have adopted to some extent the peculiar features of our service, and have thus in a degree lifted their form of worship out of the barrenness and dulness which once characterized it. Fifty years ago, “the short prayer and the long prayer,” two or three hymns rendered in a somewhat dreary way, and perhaps a chapter of Scripture in the forenoon, constituted their entire form of worship. The oral confession, the litany, the responses, the versicles, the chants, the sacred calendar, the system of periodic fast and festival, peculiar to the Episcopal Church, combined to



draw more persons into our fold than anything else. There were a few students of ecclesiastical history who entered this Church, and more especially the Ministry of the Church, because they became convinced of its Apostolic origin, and perhaps of the exclusive claims of Episcopacy.

For a time all went prosperously ; many of the best men in the community cast in their lot with us, parishes multiplied, new Dioceses sprang into being, contributions rapidly increased, missions were established at home and abroad, and it seemed as though the day might come, when the great mass of American citizens would rally around our standard. It was indeed a rare opportunity, such as we are not likely to see again very soon, and if we had had the grace and the wisdom to take due advantage of the circumstances surrounding us, we might have attained a great triumph.

But, the wind which once blew so auspiciously, has, in a measure, died away, and at the present moment this Church is making comparatively little head-way in the land at large. By a process of pulverization we have greatly multiplied the number of Dioceses, we have divided the regiment into a larger list of companies, and put a General in command over each, and multiplied our chief officers to such an extent that, on the average, we have left but one Deacon and a fraction to be ordained by each Bishop during the year. In 1878, there was a decrease in the number of persons admitted to both Deacons' and Priests' orders, and the number confirmed was 2,466 less than in the previous year. Although the Church is nearly eight times



stronger, as indicated by the list of communicants, than it was forty or fifty years ago, the number of candidates for Holy Orders is but a little more than double what it was then, notwithstanding all that has of late been done to provide gratuitous support for our candidates.

It comes within the province of this address rather to state facts, than to try to account for them. It would require more time than is now at my command even to sketch in the most cursory way the various influences now at work, both within and without the Church, that tend to obstruct its progress. A candid and thorough statement of the subject would probably give little satisfaction to any section of the Church—high, low, broad, or ritualistic.

Returning to that which is more in accord with the spirit of the present occasion, I would call your attention very briefly to some of the changes which have come over the general aspect of the Church, since the date when this parish was organized.

The change in externals is very marked. The houses of worship that were built fifty years ago differed very much in their style and furniture from those which are erected now. In most of the older churches of this Diocese, and elsewhere, the more ancient English arrangement of the chancel was discarded, and what is known as "the three-decker," loomed high in the air against the wall, with a small communion-table of wood at the base, a large oblong desk rising above and behind it, and the whole surmounted by a lofty pulpit, to which the minister sometimes found wearisome access through a mysterious passage in the rear. I have seen a clergy-



man, officiating in a strange church, on returning to the chancel, after the prayers were over, completely non-plussed as to the mode in which he was to get access to the pulpit, towering above him, and a gentleman of the congregation was obliged to leave his pew and pilot him to the place of entrance. If any one had appeared in the pulpit wearing a surplice, the presumption would have been that he was too poor to buy a silk gown. I have officiated in churches where no ecclesiastical vestments were tolerated, except on the occasion of the Holy Communion, when the minister was allowed to appear in a black gown. Even the singing of the chants and glorias in a certain quarter was regarded as a badge of Popery. And yet we were all very scrupulous as to the omission of a word in the prescribed service, which is more than can be said to-day. The observance of the Holy Days, with the exception of Good Friday and Christmas, was far from being universal; even Ash Wednesday and Lent, Epiphany and Ascension Day, in many parishes being passed without notice. It is a very noticeable and suggestive fact, that certain usages, such as supplementary prayers and conference meetings,—public services protracted from day to day and night to night, with exciting appeal and hortatory exhortation, followed by fervent, personal appeal to unconverted sinners,—which used to be regarded as peculiar to extreme low-churchmen, have now, under new names and with some modifications, passed into the hands of a school who look upon old-fashioned high-churchmen as low down in the ecclesiastical ladder. In all quarters, symbols and badges, and usages are tolerated, which



would have given much offence fifty years ago. We were once accustomed to pride ourselves upon the absolute uniformity of our worship, at all times and in all places. This boast can no longer be made, and that, not through the fault of those who have been traditionally regarded as loose Churchmen. That, upon the whole, we have gained something, in the judicious abbreviation of our services on special occasions, in the musical enrichment of our worship, in making the sanctuary and all its appointments more beautiful and attractive, cannot, I think, be denied. That some of our churches have gone to extremes in the matter of adornment and in novel ways of doing things, is also a fact, which most of us will not question.

A change may also be noted in the style of our preaching during the last half century. We always feel this in repeating a sermon that was written forty or fifty years ago. In some respects this change may be for the better, and in other respects for the worse. The distinction between the ethical and the doctrinal discourse is not as marked as it was. A wider range of topics is expected in the pulpit, more copious illustrations, greater condensation of thought, a profounder style of argument, less of vague exhortation, a keener discrimination in the handling of controverted topics, and a fairer and more courteous treatment of our adversaries. But, while in former times there may have been an amount of dogmatism in the pulpit which would now be offensive, there is danger in our day of floating off into the region of dimness and uncertainty. Everything which the preacher could once assume as not to be



questioned, and therefore not needing to be argued, is now denied, and it may require an effort on the part of the preacher to keep the doubt which floats in the air from penetrating his own spirit. He may be tempted to evade all controverted points, and try to satisfy himself and his congregation with lofty sentiments, and what are called "soul-inspiring views of truth." He may preach out of a cloud and be content, because that cloud seems to be made gorgeous and beautiful by the rays of the setting sun. But when the sun goes down altogether, as it sometimes does, how great is the darkness!

A great deal more is expected of the clergy now than was demanded in former times. Fifty years ago if the Rector held his two services on Sunday, gave a weekly lecture in the chapel, visited the families of his congregation at stated periods, looked after the sick, and distributed the Communion alms, his work was done. Guilds and church reading-rooms, and cottage-lectures and parish societies of all descriptions, and raising money for innumerable missions and pastoral missionary work in out-lying places, and daily services in Lent, and perhaps on every other day of the year,—all this was once unknown. The repose that used to be associated with the clerical office, has ceased to exist. Men must be up and doing if they would keep their place. There is no more cloistered seclusion for the clergy. They must do their thinking as they can, on foot, or in the railway train, perhaps more than in the study. We may be carrying things a little too far in this direction.

It would be impossible within the narrow limits al-



lowed me to allude to all the mighty changes in the realms of thought, as well as in practical life, which the world has seen since the day when our fathers met to organize the Church whose semi-centennial we now celebrate. It is a great thing to have lived in such an age as this. But it may be hard to keep the fire of divine truth and love burning clear and free, in an atmosphere charged with so many exhalations that come from the earth, and are of the earth, earthy. *All* the influences with which we, as theologians, feel bound to contend, may not in the end prove to be hostile, and we must be careful not to oppose blindly that which may turn out to be for the furtherance of the truth. The strongest and subtlest argument on the side of absolute and utter unbelief that I have ever read, seems to me to leave the being of a God, with all which this involves, standing, if possible, on a more impregnable foundation than before. Hear how the instincts of humanity assert themselves in the words with which the writer closes his work: "I am not ashamed to confess that with this virtual negation of God the universe has lost its soul of loveliness; and although from henceforth the precept to 'work while it is day' will doubtless but gain an intensified force from the terribly intensified meaning of the words that 'the night cometh when no man can work,' yet when at times I think, as think at times I must, of the appalling contrast between the hallowed glory of that creed which once was mine, and the lonely mystery of existence as now I find it,—at such times I shall even feel it impossible to avoid the sharpest pang of which my nature is susceptible."



It was to save men from this sense of utter desolation, to make them feel and know that there is a God in the world, to bring them home to God through Jesus Christ, to lighten the dreariness of their pilgrimage by the revelation of Him who carries their griefs, and opens to them the way of hope, that this Church was founded. How much has been done here to make men wiser and better and more Godlike, only the records of eternity can tell.

To-day we have stopped for an hour and looked back upon the road we have been travelling for the past fifty years. We have traced the history of this Church step by step from its humble beginning down to the present day. Six of the number who have filled its Rectorship still remain, five of whom take part in the services of this commemorative festival. Two only have passed away and rest from their labors. There are some present who remember the early years of the parish, and have heard the word of life at the lips of every pastor who has officiated here. Those who were young when they first entered the doors of the Church, begin to feel that they are getting old now. With them the day is far spent, and the night is at hand. They can recall many pleasant hours that have been passed here, hours when the Saviour came very near to them, and they were lifted heavenward. They look around to-day and see very few of those who once came up to worship with them. Fifty years hence when the centennial is kept, few of us will be here. Our account will have been closed and our place assigned us in another world. When the Master summons us to give an account of our



stewardship, shall we all be found ready? Have we been faithful to our trust?

As we now pass on to enter upon a new half-century, the question naturally suggests itself, what is to be the destiny of this Church in the days to come? In 1929, will the walls be still standing in the same old spot, and will the incense of prayer and praise continue to ascend from this consecrated place? It may be that the pressure of trade and the removal of the people to other regions of the city, will cause the transfer of Grace Church to some distant locality, and so the building in which we worship to-day pass away out of sight forever. But, however this may be, we doubt not that the Church will live and go on to prosper. The worship will continue to be the same, the doctrine preached the same, the spirit of zeal and holiness, we trust, will be greatly increased. Those will rise up to take our places, who, we hope, will be far in advance of us, and do a better work than any of us have done. Our children will have grown old, and we shall sleep with our fathers, when the *Centennial* is kept; but the Church will never die—its foundation standeth sure.

“ Christ is made the sure foundation,  
 Christ the head and corner-store,  
 Chosen of the Lord, and precious,  
 Binding all the Church in one,  
 Holy Sion’s help forever,  
 And her confidence alone.”











The Rev. Alexander B. Vinton, D. D.

ENTERED UPON THE RECTORSHIP OF GRACE CHURCH, IN APRIL, 1836.

AND RESIGNED IN JANUARY, 1842.







SERMON

PREACHED BY THE

REV. ALEXANDER H. VINTON, D. D.,

*Sunday Morning, May 18th, 1879.*







## SERMON.

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GENESIS XXII. : 14.—“ And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh, as it is said, to this day, ‘ In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.’ ”

These words are a part of the history of Abraham’s sacrifice of his son : a history made memorable through all time for the wonderful intervention of God and for his grand reward of faith and obedience.

Just as Abraham was about to do the terrible deed of duty and plunge the knife of sacrifice into his son, God arrested the act and showed him another victim. This illustrious deliverance made Abraham say “Jehovah-jireh,” a phrase which grew into a proverb, and bore a universal meaning, “in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”

It is a sort of poetical view of the subject, but it is somewhat striking how it ran into a course of fact, that the most peculiar manifestations of God have taken place on uplands, as if they were nearer to Heaven.

The several phases of God’s character and the exhibition of his various attributes are associated historically with certain mountains. Mount Sinai with its awful glory, and its surroundings of savage wilderness shows



us God speaking in the law of His righteousness to a world of unwilling and uncongenial men.

The Mount of the Beatitudes with its Divine sermon and Sermonizer shows us how our humanized God interpreted His own law, and how every divine virtue could be incarnated in man.

The Mount of Transfiguration lifts us right up into personal communion and eyesight with our Saviour Deity.

From the hill of the Ascension, Mount Olivet as is supposed, we are taught to look out lovingly to our receding Lord, and longingly and hopefully for His return.

From these several mountains, as we group them in our thoughts, God seems to come out into various manifestations. Each one is a type of some religious thought. But in the centre of the group is another, in which the Divine attributes kiss each other, and God and man come into the embrace of life and salvation, Mount Calvary. This is the mount of mountains. All the rest get their light from it and shed back their beauty and glory towards it.

Now these various exhibitions of God, suggesting the diverse relations we sustain to Him, might to persons of diverse temperaments and tastes be variously attractive.

From our partial way of looking at things, or from any peculiarity of character, it might happen that one Christian would be drawn by one view and another by another, and so our religious consciousness and life might be very differently tintured. I apprehend that this is in fact the case with us, and it accounts for those di-



versities of religious experience which sometimes seem almost contradictory and mutually hostile.

For example, in the first place, one might be engrossed and overpowered by thinking of the severe purity and righteousness of the Law of God. He dwells in Mount Sinai; the thunder tones fill his ear, the lightnings scathe his eyesight. That terrible "thou shalt not," overwhelms his conscience and makes him afraid of the violated law whose purity he yet adores. So that his religion becomes a religion of predominant fear, without any of the comforts of Divine communion and hope. He is the Christian of Mount Sinai.

Conscience with him holds not only the reins but the whip besides, and plies her self-inflections dreadfully. He is an unhappy believer, for a believer he still may be in every Christian verity. Though his spirit dwells in the rocky wilderness of Sinai he does not deny that there are other mountains where God may be seen. He believes in the Beatitude Hill, in Tabor and Olivet and Calvary, but he thinks he is not ripe and strong enough for these. We may pity him as we ought to do for this one-sidedness, but we ought not to blame him as if he were hugging a falsehood. I know that in these days, men are very apt to think slightingly of the Law and Sovereignty of God, to exalt man's independency so as almost to make it appear that the coming under a total subordination to any power outside of himself, is a degrading of his essential dignity and that a religion with any fear in it is a falsity and a shame.

It is plain that such an one has never ascended Mount Sinai. He has not stood up before God's ineffable



white purity, and the great shining glory of His righteousness, before which archangels veil their faces, and so he has never felt the reverence quiver through his frame which trembled on Isaiah's lips and brought him to his knees saying, "unclean, unclean." In refusing and denouncing all dread in religion he forgets the admonition of Jesus, "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear, fear him who after he hath killed, hath power to destroy both soul and body in Hell, yea, I say unto you fear him."

Oh! it is not unmanly to dread the displeasure of the glorious God who holds our destinies in His hand. It is no degradation of true dignity to fear the casting away in another life from Him and from all who are like Him. The man who thinks it is, should pass at least one thoughtful night on the top of Sinai. He may gain a new revelation there of God and of himself which may prove the dawn of salvation to him, if he is not a Christian; and I think it will make his piety more stalwart if he is one, and will deepen his religious enjoyment, when he passes on from Sinai to the other mountains, where the Lord will be seen more beautifully. Let us now pass on to some of them.

As some persons linger too long by a sort of perverse moral instinct among the terrible things of Sinai and write them all down against themselves, so there are others who are instinctively drawn to the Mount of the Beatitudes. Of a calm temper, of refined taste, of a pure moral sense, they are attracted lovingly to the living Jesus in whose loveliness every one of the beatitudes was impersonated. The whole series of precepts



in that wonderful sermon is eagerly siezed by their moral esthetic perceptions, as the crown and beauty of character. They admire them all as seen in the character of Jesus, and they admire Him with a surpassing admiration, they almost adore Him, at any rate they emulate his beautiful character, and try to reproduce it by self watchfulness and loving effort. And to an extent they succeed, and we look upon them, and pay them the glad tribute of our moral admiration. Yet they are familiar with only that one mount of the Lord.

With no strong passions, and with no profound moral analysis of themselves, they turn their backs on Mount Sinai.

With no idea of Christ but as the living teacher and exemplar, they are almost equally strangers at Calvary. Their calm temperament would not much enjoy the vision of transfiguration, where Peter in his dazed rapture desired to build tabernacles, and even the Ascension mount inspires no longing hopes, for their future is to be built upon the beatitude of their present characters.

They lose much from this partial reception of God's ideas, and we ought to pray much for them that God would reveal himself to them in his fullness, on every mount where he is to be seen.

Again we come to the Mount of Transfiguration, and this too is a type of personal religious character. On that height we see the transformed humanity of our Saviour glowing with unspeakable light and beauty. We know him to be our Saviour, the familiar Jesus of our daily intercourse, yet borrowing such a glory from Heaven that he seems like God standing there. God,



yet our own Jesus, and so in delighted communion we long to stay there and build tabernacles. The world is a great way below us. Its businesses and cares seem impertinent, its pleasures worthless ; sensuous things, degrading. We live a sort of upper life. This seems very imaginary to some persons. It is imaginative, because imagination enters into every mental consciousness that does not come straight through the senses, but it is a real consciousness nevertheless. It is reached by the strong contemplation of divine truths and facts. It comes to those moods of meditation when the soul abstracts herself from her externals and enters up into the spiritual life, and sings as she goes,

“Nearer, my God, to thee.”

And sings when she rests,

“This willing soul would stay  
In such a frame as this,  
'Til it is called to soar away  
To everlasting bliss.”

Our most highly devotional hymns are inspired on the Mount of Transfiguration, when the soul lays hold on God, communes with him, or reposes placidly on his bosom, and God is both seen and felt.

This state of feeling comes across us by snatches, sometimes in church with strains of psalmody, when they are pure and simple, or at the sacrament when the heart is fit for it. But sometimes this mood dominates the Christian's whole life, and becomes a habit. He is actually tabernacled on the Mount of Transfiguration. It is a luxurious sort of piety thus ante-tasting Heaven, and of itself with nothing to balance it, it is unwhole-



some, and runs to feebleness like all other pleasures. God means that we should enjoy it only at intervals, getting divine recreation and strength from seeing Him. The disciples must not tabernacle on the mount with Christ and Moses and Elias. They must quit the glory and go down among men to cast out devils and preach the Gospel, and work and die for Christ.

The way in which our Father fits us for this close communion, this felt partnership, is sometimes very strange. By bereavement, when he draws away from your bosom, young mother, the baby that nestles there, and you feel as if a part of your heart was amputated, and when he takes that manly son of yours, my friend, in whom you hoped to live over again a sort of double life of pride and love, or when he blasts your fortunes in a night, and your tall hopes lie crushed under the wheels of disaster, leaving you almost beggared,—by these, or some such way, God often brings his children nearer to him consciously than he could by any other method.

You feel a hand bearing on you, and you seize it to toss it angrily off. But you look up and see that it is God's hand and you dare not, and as you look you catch his eye all aglow with love for you and then you are ashamed, and mourn and melt and trust and love and lay your head on his bosom and say, "Father, not my will, but thine." The sweetness of that feeling of oneness is the rapture of the transfiguration. You feel nearer Heaven and you will come down from that height with a heavenlier mind and a divine vigor to do your Christian work until you die.



We reach now the Mount of the Ascension, the place of high hopes and triumph and never ceasing cheerfulness. This mount stands right opposite to Mount Sinai. It is skirted by no rocky wilderness. It looks down on vineyards and olive gardens and a sunny spread of bloom, and the Old Jerusalem gleaming from her turrets the light of God, and it looks up and away to the better gardens of Paradise and the glory of the New Jerusalem made sure for our entrance, because Christ our forerunner hath already entered. This mount, therefore, typifies the religion of hope. Some Christians have it like a wellspring, always bubbling and running over in fresh sweetness, making every thing about them cheery and charming.

It is a religion which recommends itself to all who witness it, a beautiful voucher of the truth and power of Gospel grace.

I once knew a Christian of this sort, in this town, a plain man, who went about his daily toil and temptation with no more distrust of God's fidelity in supplying a daily grace than he had of the trustworthiness of his wife in supplying his nightly supper. His life was a sacred song. He was struck down by an accident which his physician said would prove speedily fatal, and when a friend asked him whether he was ready to die at once he replied, "That matter was settled long ago, let us sing a hymn together before we part." This is the hope which is the anchor of the soul entering within the veil with Jesus. It is the vital nerve of duty, the softener of trials, the foretaste of the sweet river that flows hard by the throne of God.



So we group the four Mounts of Sinai, of the Beatitudes, of the Transfiguration, and of the Ascension, each one of them a type of some form of personal piety, but each, when standing alone, of a partial and inadequate piety.

I said that in the centre of the group rises Mount Calvary, and its cross, radiating its own illumination to the rest, and giving them all their real meaning and value. Calvary, the solemn spot of the sacrifice of our Saviour God, slain for our sins, the archetype of whom Isaac was the type, but with a difference. Surrendered willingly by His Father to die, there was no withholding of the sacrificial blow, no accepting of the will for the deed. His living heart was pierced. His living blood did flow, the blood that cleanseth from all sin, whose preciousness bought us off from doom. This is that preëminent Mount of the Lord, in which he will be seen in his wholeness. Mount Calvary reveals the whole Godhead,—righteousness, peace, truth and love in one display by God and man in one person. It is the central truth of the universe to be seized by the soul in one grand central act of faith, and all piety to be true and whole, intelligent and affectionate, pure and practical besides, should have the cross for its rational centre and the Crucified for its power of effective life. Well grounded in this, no matter what forms your piety takes it will not be heretical, nor fallacious. No matter whether your conscience draws you much to Sinai, or your ambition to be Christ-like leads you to the Beatitude Mount, or your spiritual temperament to Hermon, and the Transfiguration, or your ardent feelings to the



top hopes of the Ascension, while your soul is still cabled by a living strong faith, it may drift with the breeze toward either development; may rise or sink with the tide of your common or uncommon life. You will never swing beyond the safe deep water upon any rock or shoal of peril.

And mark now the relations of these other mounts to Mount Calvary, so that it is everything to them and they are dangerous without it. Mount Sinai, with its terrors of conviction, can do the delicate conscience no harm so long as it points to the cross where sin is thoroughly atoned and the law propitiated. Nay, the law is then the very schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. We love the very conviction, when it makes us love the Saviour more, as the conviction is deeper the pardon is sweeter. So with the Beatitudes. To undertake them without the cross, to emulate the living Christ, without having felt the love of the dying Christ, is to reverse God's plan of human holiness. We want the prime incentive of forgiven gratitude. We want the strength of His life infused into our own by faith. We want the spirit of Christ through the Holy Ghost who was sent by Christ, and sent because he died, before we can begin to be Christ-like after the pattern of the Beatitudes. Till then that beautiful sermon on the mount is only a reprimand, "Ye know not what spirit ye are of."

It is so with Mount Hermon, and the meditative rapture of divine communion. Remove it out of reach of Calvary and Christ and its voiceless joy is only a transcendental abstraction, a poet's dream, or a heathen



fancy. But carry Christ in your heart up there, and his promises in your open hand, and you will realize delightedly, in your prayerful meditation, how he lays his heart side by side with yours, and manifests himself to you as he does not unto the world.

And so is it again with Mount Olivet and its Ascension hopes. Without the crucified and risen Christ what can you best hereafter be to your thoughts beyond the guesses of Scipio's dream, a twilight, "*may be*," with a dark opposite horizon of *may not be*. With the light of Calvary how different. "I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." "Fear not, little flock, it is my Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This hope may scale the Heavens, for on this Mount of the Lord he is surely seen.

Thus, brethren, I have said how these several mounts are typical, illustrating different styles of personal religion. May we not generalize the thought and say that they illustrate as well the different systems of Christian doctrine and school of religious thought, which, while all begin and come around to Calvary, yet love to alight and rest on different mountains where they think the Lord is best seen.

Thus we might say that the system of Calvin, that great and holy thinker, a system which dissects human nature down to the minutest cords of its moral organism, and even undertakes to analyze, with sharp logic, the government and mind of God, that Calvinism moves round and round Mount Sinai, so absorbed with its Sovereignty that half the time it turns its back on Cal-



vary, and its religion declines into a gloomy conscientiousness. And we may say the same of that far inferior system, the opposite in all other respects of Calvinism, which makes Heaven to be the reward of pious deeds, and so prescribes penances, abstinences, confessions as the price of pardon. They both need the light of Calvary and one of them its scorching blaze. For while Calvinism needs the mellow brightness of Christ's dying love to tone down its severity, Romanism needs a blaze that shall at once burn up its profane human additions, and make it see that man cannot be saved by himself, nor by a priest, but by the cross and the Crucified alone, through the simplest faith of the soul.

The Beatitude Mount represents a school of religious thought and life familiar enough to you, for you have lived in its neighborhood all your days. In the person of its great typical leader, Channing, we see the best it can do for man. No life was ever purer, no temper gentler, no conscience truer, no nature in its wholeness more refined than his. His life was the excellence of humanity, and his whole religious consciousness was absorbed by the enthusiasm of humanity, and merged in it, getting no tinge from the other mounts of holiness. The awe of the great Sovereignty, the joy of personal supernal communion, the vivid hopes of the ascension height, did not modulate by a single touch of diviner emphasis the beauty of his own humanity, while Calvary with its interpretation of atonement was almost abhorrent to his thoughts. And Channing, though typical of his school, stood not alone, he has followers



almost as eminent as he in the graces that are engendered of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Transfiguration Mount is the loved abiding place of the mystic school of theology, which sometimes came near forgetting Calvary and its faith in the glad absorption of its divine love. We must speak of it, though, tenderly and reverently. Its spirit has found a voice in too many of our hymns, and called out the sweetest music of our souls in unison too often for us to depreciate the mystical tendency. And while we remember Bernard, and Tauler, and Fenelon, and Guion, who dwelt much on Mount Hermon and saw the Lord there, we may even wish that we were more of us as they were.

Now lastly, let the Mount of Ascension represent the Wesleyans glorying in the cross, never forgetting its wounds, the blood and death, but exalting them all the more with a piety so full of hope that you hear nothing of the gloomy unpardonable sin and the fatal reprobation, but only the joy of those who welcome a coming Saviour with hosannas.

Various as these schools are, they are not various religions but different types of the one Christianity crystallized into organisms. They show us how the essential unity of the faith can work out into various development. Nay, not only can, but always has. This divine expression of the Christian faith is a normal feature of Christian history. Whether from the progress of religious experience, from the changes of the times, from the fashion of thinking, or from whatever



cause besides, the history of the church has been marked all along by periods and epochs in which some one or other of these various expressions of the faith has been dominant.

A former mode of thinking would be thrown into perspective, and a new one occupy the foreground, and so on in periodical and regular sequence. Each would slide into the next insensibly until the fresh development would utter itself in some pronounced way to arrest the attention and make the church know that a new epoch had dawned. Just as the hands of a clock glide on from one figure to another and we are unconscious of the lapse until the clock strikes and gives notice of a new hour-begun. And this Christian history is like a clock work in another respect, for it is a rotary history, always repeating itself. There is only a definite number of figures upon the dial of the clock to which the hands must point, so there is only certain variety of religious thinking and feeling possible to the human soul, which when they have been experienced in succession, must begin again and follow in the same periodical circuit. And just as the differing numbers of the dial denote a true succession, while the interior motive power is in order and the hands pivoted at the centre, so these diverse expressions of religious life are true while actuated by a living faith in the central atoning sacrifice. But if the clock's mechanism be deranged then the hands stand still and denote no more the true time, but only a dead and worthless fixedness, and it must go to its maker to be restored. And so if any form or school of Christian faith separate itself



from the atonement it becomes a lifeless fallacy, with no power to convert, or to edify, or to save the soul, a Christless system that must pass away and be lost like everything else that has no Saviour.

This various development of the faith which I have said is characteristic of Christian history is true not only in the large way but in smaller ways. The makro-cosm has always a great many microcosms to represent it. So that we may take the same sort of changes in the life of a particular parish as in the church at large and with every new generation in a parish we can mark a modified form of the beliefs in which the parish was first trained.

As I speak so I can hardly help looking to this church to find my illustration. And I recall to thought the saintly man under whose ministry this organic church almost sprang into strange life and full fledged power, that made it speedily only the second church in the Diocese. Numbers flocked to his ministry almost as doves to their windows.

So quick was the success that although the church had lingered through several years of languid preparation and almost of doubtful life, ready to die, this masterful ascendancy seemed to have no infancy at all. The church seemed just born, yet robed with powerful life.

The preaching of this spiritually minded man of God was a full enforcement of the Divine Sovereignty leading straight to the cross of the atoning Emanuel. He determined to know nothing else among this people save Jesus Christ and him crucified, and the living fruits



of his ministry of three years were a multitude of men and women zealous for God and instant in good words and works.

Such was the condition and character of this church when at the beginning of my ministry it became my pleasant lot to be its Rector, nearly a generation and a half ago. Forty-three years give ample time for all sorts of changes in a parish. The goings and the comings, the deaths and the births, may almost obliterate the likeness to its early self and only a few may remember the temple in its first glory. But there is always an inherited and traditional influence which clings to a congregation and gives it in its survival the stamp and complexion of its pedigree, especially when its origin was marked by strong vitality. It has been so, I believe, with this church, which retains freshly its religious activities, and in the complexional variety of its teachings has always moored its faith and hope and life to the cross of Him "who made there a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction" for human sin.

Here the central mount of the Lord is unobscured, and he has always been seen upon it. May it always be so. May this church's history always be rotary, revolving round the cross, and then will every variety of teaching be both beautiful and safe and saving. For whenever an idiosyncrasy or peculiarity of belief pursues a right-lined advance it becomes only a tangent to the charmed and holy circle of the faith, it soon grows to be exclusive and passes on to an exile of solitude in a wilderness where there is only darkness or malaria or



starvation. As the history of the Christian faith has gone on so it will continue to go, no doubt, as long as men live in this world of faith.

The dial of the clock will still carry its fixed figures, denoting the successive changes and periods of belief. But bye and bye there comes an end to all this. There comes a last day when as the hands come together, the clock will strike the period of high noon, and then stand still forever. The life of faith and probation for mankind is finished. The other life of vision and destiny is opened in noontide glory at the coming of the personal Christ. All varieties of belief will be instantly merged in the conviction of seeing. The several schools of religious thought which sprang from temper or temperament or training, will easily adjust themselves to the truth of the revealed Christ, and we know what that revelation will be, "I beheld and lo! in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts and of the elders stood a Lamb as it had been slain." It is the lamb that God found in the place of Isaac. So that Calvary is the true Jehovah-Jireh in heaven as well as here.

And there was a song, "Thou art worthy for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood," so that the absorbing consciousness in heaven is the grateful love of a forgiven sinner. And ought it not to be so here, if we would be prepared for it there? Can any thing match it as a power of spiritual renewal, a power of religious activity, a power of hope and of charity? As the delighted contemplation of heaven is the Crucified, and as all sorts of Christians wish to die at His feet, shall we not anticipate that melody of delight and pre-



pare to die thus, to live thus by keeping in view the slain Lamb of the Mount Jehovah-Jireh, and letting its melody breathe from our lives ?

“ All praise to the Lamb, accepted I am  
Through faith in the Saviour's adorable name,  
In Him I confide, His blood is applied,  
For me He hath suffered, for me He hath died ;  
Not a doubt can arise to darken the skies  
Or hide for one moment my Lord from my eyes ;  
In Him I am blest, I lean on his breast,  
And lo ! in His wounds I continue to rest.”



















# NATURE AND GRACE,

A SERMON

*Preached in Grace Church, Sunday Evening, May 18th, 1879.*

BY THE

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## SERMON.

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I. SAMUEL, xxxi. : 4.—“Therefore Saul took a sword and fell upon it.”

II. TIMOTHY, iv. : 6, 7.—“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that day.”

In the conclusion of the speech given in a previous chapter, in which the prophet Samuel signified his withdrawal from public office, ere retiring into comparatively private life, we find the prophet pointing out by a sign from heaven the error that the people had committed in choosing the rule of an earthly King. “Is it not wheat harvest to-day, I will call unto the Lord and He shall send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great which ye have done in the sight of the Lord in asking you a King.”

More impressive by far, however, than the storm of rain and lightning that ensued upon the prophet's prayer, is the warning, subsequently given, in the character and fall of the first monarch himself—a warning the more significant that he was, as we shall see, the conspicuous possessor of extraordinary natural gifts.



The popular temper at the time of which we speak had fallen off from simple manners into a taste for the show of power. Hence the wish for a leader whose brilliant endowments would add lustre to the nation that he governed. The rulers of neighboring kingdoms were distinguished in this way. Israel, upon the contrary, possessed no more in the prophet Samuel than a deeply pious man—now, as he himself expressed it, “old, and gray-headed,” who owed his ability for administration not so much to natural attainments, as to grace daily given from heaven, and who had aimed at little more than the maintenance of such integrity that none would charge him with having defrauded any during the long course of years that he had sat by the gate of judgment. The Philistine Kings were a great deal better than this. Therefore Israel likewise must have a King, a splendid King, a genius of a King, who, with crown and sceptre, and a large train of followers, would move in stately procession to judgment, and march to battle in the pomp of war, thus giving to the Hebrew people a conspicuous distinction among the nations.

This, and more than this, they have shortly in Saul, the first monarch. We know, too, what came of it all. And it seems to us that the tragic story is meant not merely to teach the Hebrews their folly in asking a King, but is also intended to exhibit the more general truth that personal greatness, or true royalty of character, is not the outcome of unassisted natural ability. “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

In order, however, that the lesson may be the more



impressive, the natural gifts, and even the natural disposition of the King, are in their way admirable, which is clearly consistent with the end in view, as indeed nothing else would have been. Had a man been chosen who was inferior in talent, or who fell below the standard of the time in the matter of morals, it would have been said that his failure was due to these deficiencies, rather than to any want of supernatural grace. Had a vicious character been selected, the warning would have been entirely lost. The notorious Ahab, for example, of a later date, though able, was a consummately wicked man. He was sensual, he was cowardly, he was cruel. He was mean. He was deceitful. He was, indeed, such a combination of vices that we can say with justice of him, what Macaulay says of Barere, that while in all sorts of iniquity Ahab has had rivals, yet when everything is put together, sensuality and poltroonery and baseness, mendacity and barbarity, the result is something which is scarcely paralleled in the history of the world. Now had Saul been a man like this, his failure would have been a matter of course, and his terrible end would not have taught the lesson that it does. But Saul was not such a man. On the contrary, he was actually better in some respects than many who are commonly regarded as examples. He was not mean as even Jacob was at the beginning of *his* career. He was not sensual as Solomon. He was not idolatrous as a number of his successors. He was neither cowardly nor cruel. Nay, it's a remarkable thing and corroborates our view of the drift of the story, that of naturally vicious traits, of natural moral disad-



vantages, spoiling influence and hindering success, it is difficult to put your finger on any in the character of Saul. There were instances of vanity towards the close of his career, yet Moses himself was not more modest than the future King when first introduced to Samuel, and if he was sometimes jealous of others rivalling him in public favor, it was no more than what public men are ever apt to be. The exceptions in any age are rare. We repeat, then, there was no vicious trait compelling failure, but a great deal that looked the other way. The character was in many respects a strong one. The King's administrative ability was unquestionable. He established monarchical government, and was the first of a line of Kings that lasted for over a thousand years. These were no puny hands that could lay foundations so deep and strong and enduring. There were none of the weak sentimentalities in him that belong to timid natures, while the exercise of war and the pressure of responsibility prevented indolence, or the kindred meaner vices. He had not only a strong intellect, but a kind heart. Everybody liked him even though they blamed. We read, "The prophet came no more to see the King unto the day of his death," but "Samuel mourned for Saul," which, under the circumstances, he would scarcely have done had the offender been otherwise than a loveable man. Both the lowest people and the highest seemed to have the same feeling about him. No idea was more abhorrent to the Hebrews than that of suicide. Yet Saul's body-servant gave up his life at his master's side on the mountain of Gilboa. The warning of the monarch's career, therefore, is perhaps



as impressive as it could possibly have been made. The terrible issue transpires in a naturally kind nature, and in spite of endowments such as are rarely given to men. It is the blasting of the monarch of the forest. Saul is every inch a King as he strides to battle with the "diadem" we read of, and the "bracelet" on his arm, and with the tall spear that was his sceptre, from which he never parted. Gigantic child of nature! He reminds us of Homer's Agamemnon with the golden studded staff. His very errors are indications of high possibilities of power. He has the hardihood to offer sacrifice without mediation of prophet or priest. In spite of his unquestionable affection for his son, he is on the point of putting him to death for breaking a military law. And the key of the whole, the explanation I mean, of the ultimate fearful failure, is to be found, we believe, in the very expression that we have now used—Saul is "The child of nature."

You have no doubt frequently observed that there is a vast difference of some kind between the heroes of the classical divinities on the one hand, and the heroic characters of Holy Scripture on the other. The former are notoriously dominated by their impulses, and are represented as acting, or as refraining from action, only according as their emotions lead them in one direction or another. They have strong bodies *plus* a correspondingly strong self will. Such are the warriors of Homer, whose very glory it is that they always act out their pleasure, reasonable or unreasonable, right or wrong, but with God's people it is otherwise. While the greatness of the former class is measured by strength of feel-



ing, the greatness of the latter class, as of the prophets, for example, St. Paul, is measured by their ability to regulate the inclinations, and to curb the feelings ; in other words, not by the amount of feeling, but by the power of self restraint. The strength of the one is the strength of nature. The strength of the other is the strength of grace. There is a consequent difference in the endurance of the two. The endurance of the one is measurable, being strictly proportioned to the natural faculties that such men possess, and to the natural opportunities in the midst of which they are placed. The endurance of the other class is always unmeasurable, since the power to maintain it is derived at every moment, according as it is needed, from the Fountain of immeasurable strength, the "power of an endless life." Hence the great men of Homer never rose above themselves ; the good men of the Bible always do rise above themselves. "Not I," says St. Paul, "but Christ that liveth in me." Each is a King in his own way, but the kingdom of the one is temporary, the royalty of the other is enduring. And the very gist of the story of Saul is the revelation it discovers to the world, that a King in sinews, a King in brain, a King in temperament, is not really or enduringly a King at all, permanent success being won in quite another way. Saul, we take it, is neither more nor less than a Homeric hero. He is a Hector or Agamemnon speaking Hebrew. His conduct is directed by his passions, and his passions are like the waves of the sea. "His mind is a door unhinged, and like every unhinged mind moves on no principle, but swings and bangs with every wind."



Take, in illustration of this, two opposite instances in his history—the one good, and the other evil. Having a heart readily quivering to the touch of music, and very impressible also by devotional ideas, Saul, on one occasion, gives utterance to hymns, as the prophets did, and so ably, too, as an *improvisation* of elevated thought and language, that he is spoken of as inspired. A “new heart is given to him,” as the expression is. In the same way, near the close of his life, the King is once more in an exstasy of religious fervor, so much so, and with such wild enthusiasm, that he cannot bear the restraint even of his outer garment, but lies down naked, “all that day and all that night.”

On the other hand, however, we have also another very different story. “And it came to pass on the morrow that the evil spirit came upon Saul, and he prophesied in the midst of the house. And David played with his hand as at other times, and there was a javelin, or spear, in Saul’s hand, and Saul cast the javelin, for he said, ‘I will smite David even to the wall.’”

Evidently then the man was as prone to evil as he was to good. Each disposition was a mere humor. His pleasure could never be anticipated, or his conduct reckoned upon, so that upon the whole our explanation seems to be just. Without respect for law, human or divine; nay, without process of reasoning, he is immediately set a going, and is precipitated into action by any emotion that occurs to him of whatever kind, and by any circumstances in which he is placed. He knows as little of obedience to a higher law, or of ruling his spirit, as a tiger. Hence the evil, hence the apparent



good. The laws of Heaven he regards so little, that when Samuel prophecies his ruin, the King has no higher desire than for the keeping up of appearances. He prays that the prophet will still treat him as King "in the eyes of the elders of the people." Reformation never occurs to him. God's pardon is unthought of. Repentance never dawns upon his mind any more than upon Hector or Ulysses. And this brings us to his end. A friend once assured us that when he stood some years ago on the side of the Gilboa range, he found it impossible to attend much to the natural grandeur of the landscape, for the horror associated with it through the suicide of Saul, and yet the scene itself is not unworthy of the recollections that lie upon it. The unbroken barrenness that looks as if it had been wasted by fire and flood, is fittingly enough associated with the memory of the great sinner whom God permitted to become his own executioner in punishment of his sins. And what a sight it was—Saul dead. There are some bodies that after death still wear a bloom upon them of sweetness and light and love. There are others that have a sort of ashen gray, as if they had lost their proper color under the blighting of a curse. The light does not fall upon them genially. We would not have children touch them. And such must have seemed the fallen King, with the now clammy hair that Samuel had once anointed, and the bleeding lips that but a few years before had so responded to prophets' harps and sung Jehovah's praises, that men said he was inspired. We turn away with the question—poor heart, is it damned forever? And the

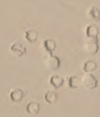


faithful boy who fell with him, like the traveler's dog that Scott writes of, that "sobbed out his life by his master's side on the heather of Cathedricam." But we should not like to have an end like that. We should not like to have a life like that—mere natural ability unrestrained and unprincipled, without self-denial and without faith.

Turn now to the other Saul. He also lived in a transition period. He also laid foundations, but the task of the King was slight compared with the task of the Apostle. The King moved with the current of the popular will; the Apostle had it all against him. The King had to hold and extend an earthly kingdom, which the more firmly he held, and the more widely he extended, the louder applause he received from those whose applause he craved. But Saul of Tarsus has a different mission. He has to resist not merely the world without, but his own countrymen and his dearest friends. He has actually to destroy the system with which he was identified by truth and education. In order to preach the truth he has to seem to men untrue. He has to tear up the prejudices not merely of the heathen, but of his dearest friends. "His opponents are not merely Roman Governors or heathen mobs, but those who make their boast of Moses, and claim to be equally disciples of the Christ." He has a conflict with Pagans. He has a harder conflict with Judea. Enemies in front, but more bitter enemies behind, who dog his steps, deny his authority, and in assaulting him judge his motives. This is the situation of Saul of Tarsus, yet how different his conduct from that of the son of



Kish. The King takes his life because of one defeat. The Apostle is "in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft, beaten with rods, stoned and shipwrecked, in weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness." But listen, because He said unto me, my strength is made perfect in weakness, therefore shall I fall upon my sword. No, no. But therefore most gladly will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. "Therefore," marvellous language! "I take pleasure in necessities and persecutions and reproaches and disasters for Christ's sake. When I am weak then am I strong." Never was there a happier life. Not because he had his own will, but because he was content to do without his own will, having made the resolve and having kept it. "This one thing I do. I press forward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." He did not see his labors clothed with success, or at least only in small measure, but he saw Jesus the finisher, as well as author of his faith, giving the increase in his own time and way. Saul, the King, was the slave of his own passion and caprice and will. Therefore the vacillating life, and the miserable, disgraceful end. Paul, the Apostle, was Jesus' servant, the servant not of an idea, but of a person; not of a theology, but of a Heavenly Master, and from the day that he was blinded with the light near Damascus, to the hour that he entered upon fuller light at his martyrdom, he lived to do the work of Him to whom he said, at first, "What wilt thou have me to do?" St. Paul found his whole aim





and life in Jesus Christ. He had been chosen in Christ, ordained in Christ, accepted in Christ. He lived to glorify Christ, and expected to be glorified in Christ. This gave unity to the man's purposes, serenity to his distresses, rest to his frequent weariness, liberty to his bondage, consolation to his disappointments, and dignity to his apparent failures. And therefore when death came, it found a King who could look at it with quiet eye, as the lips calmly uttered the words, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give me at that day."

After all that has been said, and so well said, with regard to the history of this parish, after yesterday's historical narration in whose representations of the last fifty years beauty and justice were so happily blended, it would be worse than superfluous to add anything derived from my own brief experience, so brief, that I am always surprised every time I come here, at the cordial way in which my ministry among you seems to be still kept in mind. On this subject of the parish, therefore, I shall say no more than express the sincere prayer that the next fifty years may be blessed to this house of God as much and even more than the last half century has been, and that the walls of this edifice may be increasingly consecrated as the years go on with the associations of prayers made and answered, and of sweet communion with the blessed Lord.

To the persons now listening to me, however, let me



say something more by way of applying the lessons we have drawn from these two notable lives. Nothing can be more certain than that the future years of your life will contain some forms of trial. For example, it is impossible for us to go through the world without occasionally finding it imposed upon us as a duty to contend against great odds on behalf of truth and righteousness. There are circumstances under which silence is wrong, and peace is criminal.

There are times when an honest man's conscience compels him to recollect that he is something better than a spectator in the world, and that the account he will be called to give at the end will not be merely that of a traveler. In our time, perhaps in every time, the air is full of grave questions, whose decision must be followed by lasting consequences both to religion and to the country. The strong temptation is to act with the majority always, to move with the strongest and cheer with the loudest. It is hard to stand by what the world rejects. It is hard to repose calmly on your own deepest thought. It is hard to live upon your own convictions of what is right, and hold by them and abide by them, and not be over anxious to be heard or understood or sympathized with, confident that in the end, though it may be years after you are in your grave, the truth will prevail, and the world will come round. We shrink from the consequences of God's law. We look round and cling in a dependent manner. We ask what others will think. We ask what men will say. It looks to us as if there were a sort of disgrace in standing quite alone.



Then, again, as there are times when we are called to fight, so there are times when we are called to suffer. The temptations of the world are no trifle. To see others with less brain and inferior powers in every way, who have possibly started behind you in the race, gradually overtake you and tread upon your heels and pass you, to hear the world's applause of them as they speed ahead of you, to see them crowned with everything that makes the present life enjoyable, and yourself lagging behind and growing faint and weary because you are weighted with something that they have cast off, fidelity to Jesus Christ; or, worse still, to see wife and children compelled to lag behind with you in a humble lot and a hard life, and not always, poor things, uncomplainingly; to know, with all this, that youth is passing, middle life may be gone, or possibly the decays of old age already upon you, to have the foreboding that your early hopes are to be disappointed, and that you can only now creep to the grave comparatively unknown and poor, and at last leave to the children around your bed no other inheritance than the clean white name of an honest father—well, what is it? State the case at its worst, even then, brethren, this church in which we are now assembled is not large enough to hold the fortune that would correspond in magnitude and glory to the heritage which, under such circumstances, you leave to your boys and girls, since it is that very fidelity to God's law that has made the glory of St. Paul, nay the glory of the King of Kings Himself, His sceptre, His crown, His throne, and His name above every name. What will you do, then, when the call thus comes to contend or to suffer? Will



you yield, as Saul yielded, or will you, like the Apostle, so stand in a Higher Strength than your own, as to be able to say when all things are done, and all the conflict past, "I am now ready to be offered, I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith, henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory which the Lord the righteous Judge will give me at that day?"























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